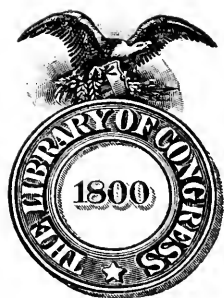


Black Mammy



AND OTHER POEMS
BY
WILLIAM LIGHTFOOT VISSCHER







Nov







Yours Faithfully
Wm. L. Fischer.

BLACK MAMMY:

A SONG OF THE SUNNY SOUTH,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY WILLIAM LIGHTFOOT VISSCHER, LL. B.

SECOND ILLUSTRATED EDITION.

Pour passer le temps.

CHEYENNE, WYO.:
BRISTOL & KNABE, PRINTERS AND BINDERS.
1886.

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THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO MY
DARLING LITTLE DAUGHTER,
VIVA GLEN VISSCHER,
WITH THE HOPE THAT SHE MAY SOME TIME WRITE
A MUCH BETTER BOOK.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

During a period of more than twenty-five years, while the author of this volume was engaged in the duties of soldier, journalist or actor, he has, now and then, written something which friends have been kind enough to call poetry. From a mass of such of this as he had at hand, he has made the selection here presented, and asks for it a kindly and forbearing consideration at the hands of a generous public.

WILL L. VISSCHER.

Denver, Colorado, Feb. 9th, 1885.

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND EDITION.

As the first edition of this book was exhausted within a very few weeks after its publication, the second one is offered with a hope that it will be exhausted in even less time, for I am anxious to exhibit the fact that I can stand the exhaustion with as much fortitude as the public can.

Gratefully,

WILL L. VISSCHER.

Cheyenne, Wyo. Feb. 26th, 1886.

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BLACK MAMMY.

A SONG OF THE SUNNY SOUTH.

CANTO FIRST.

APOSTROPHE.

“HARP of the North,” the Wizard sang,
And tuned his glowing lays
’Mid gallant deeds and battle’s clang
And clan to clan’s affrays.
Could I but sing so sweet a song—
And strong—as Scotia’s bard,
I’d ring the charge of every wrong
Till tyranny set guard;
More fit, for me, a sweet refrain
Of home and long ago.

Harp of the South, I strike again
The dear, old, quaint banjo.

BLACK MAMMY.

No organ's diapason swell,
In grand cathedral, dim,
E'er on the heart of novice fell,
In vesper's sacred hymn,
With more impress of love and soul,
And deep devotion true,
Than Southern song to mem'ry's goal
Are borne, my harp, by you.

THE SPINNING WHEEL.

And now I sing to the banjo ring,
In song by memory led,
And hear a sound like whispers round
The grave of the Past, long dead;
'Tis a whirl and a hum,
And a doleful thrum,
But music heart can feel—
I hear as before,
In days of yore,
Black mammy's spinning wheel.

It brings me joy, as when a boy
I sat in her cabin door,
And heard her sing to the spindle's ring,
As she paced the "puncheon" floor;
From the dawn to the gloam,
In the old South home,
A mammy, black and leal,
She trudged to and fro,
In the long ago,
And wrought at her spinning wheel.

How blest the days, how sweet the ways,
That Kate and I saw then—
My sister Kate, whom God and fate,
Have taken to His Aidenn.
Now 'neath the orange trees,
Kissed by each balmy breeze
That thro' magnolias steal,
Under the bloom
Lies Katie's tomb,
And still's the spinning wheel.



Frank Bond

MUSIC

I.

A MEMORY.

Come, sit beside me, daughter mine;
Where vines of honey-suckle twine,
And in a simple way I'll tell,
With rhyme and music, how befell
The story of a grandame, who
Now rests beneath a southern yew.
Her blood was from dark Afric's race,
And black her good and kindly face;
Her heart was pure, and strong and free,
And, she it was who swaddled me;
An infant on her breast I lay,
And at her knee I learned to say,
That "now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep."
A foster mother—mammy dear—
And loving as your mother here.
The twanging of the banjo's strings,
To recollection softly brings
The times and scenes, of those blest days,

Of honor's prime and gen'rous ways,
That marked the home of bloom and sun
Before the war's dark work begun;
Before the fields were ribbed and scarred,
And battle trenches marked and marred,
And wrinkled o'er with ruthless hand,
The face of that my native land.

II.

I see the fires blazing bright
That lit the "quarters," when at night,
The slaves returned from teeming field,
Their tributes to King Momus yield;
Some dance the happy hours away
To tamborine and banjo play.
While others chant the "Jawbone" song
In darkey patois, queer and strong,
And some discuss the goodly cheer,
Sent by "Old Mistiss," held so dear;
Contentment rules, with guileless glee,
A synonym, for them, of "free,"
Their liberty was greater then

Than that of many "hired men,"
Whose very vote, in truth, belongs
Within the pittance and the thongs
That bind them to the "nabob's" wheels—
A master who no pity feels,
But leaves the poor to feed its sick,
And gives the needy but a kick.
The slave knew not the thought of care,
But knew that shelter, food and wear,
Were sure to come as night and day,
And thus he jogged his happy way.

III.

I see Sis Tabb's red-turbaned head,
And hear her say, "You eats white bread—
You coal-black sinnahs, here to-night—
But mind you's out wid mawnin's light;
De pusley's growin' in de cawn,
An' when de roostah blow his hawn
Be out at work, yo' level bes',
And 'arn it when de rain brings res'."
In great authority she's grown,

Since children, white, beside her own,
Have been consigned to her command.
And learned her slipper and her hand.
Those times are gone, and Jube, at last,
An aged soul, comes moving past;
His head is white as driven snow,
His manly form is bending low;
He was "Black Mammy's" good "old man"
And brother of his "Uncle Dan."
Since "Freedom" came, hard times' deep plows
Have furrowed both their dusky brows.
And one bewails his long since dead,
The other pleads for crusts of bread—
List to the banjo's plaintive strings
And hear the dirge old Juba sings:

IV.

SIS TABB.

'Way down by de Yazoo rivah,
At home whar I was bawn,
An' whar I spent my younger days,
'Mong cotton an' de cawn,

I used to hab a good ole wife,
De white folks call Sis Tabb,
But now she's lyin' underneath
A cold, gray, granite slab.
An' I want to see de place
Whar ole Sis Tabb is laid,
Down by de Yazoo rivah,
Whar de posies bloom and fade.

Many's de time, when Jube was sick,
An' couldn' hol' his row,
Sis Tabb retch out an' holp a hill,
Wid her own long-handled hoe;
Many's de night, in 'possum time,
When de woods was turnin drab,
Ise brung dem file-tail roamers home,
Fur good old Aunt Sis Tabb.

Ise roamed aroun' a right smart chance,
An' had some friends thoo life,
But none was good and kind and true,
Like dat my po' ole wife;

No kinder pusson evah lived,
An' earth will nevah hab
A warmer heart or better soul,
Dan good ole Aunt Sis Tabb.

V.

Thus Juba chants his wail to-day,
And Dan comes limping 'long the way;
He knows me not, his weakened sight
Is tender in the glare of light.
The poor old darkey's dappled eyes
Have hindered him the glad surprise—
The mighty joy—could he but trace
In features mine, "young marster's" face;
He leans upon his crooked cane,
With hat in hand, to thus complain:

VI.

OLD BLACK DAN.

I'm a po' ole niggah man
An' my name is Uncle Dan;

I am well nigh onto three sco' years an' ten;
I'm fur along de way,
Nigh de stoppin' place dey say,
An' I'm weak, an' feeble too, you kin depen'.

Den give de ole man a mite,
Jis fur to buy a little bite,
Fur I'm hawngry to de co',
An' de wolf am at de do',
An' I'm mighty feared he's gwine to mosey in.

Jis a little while ago
I could sling de ax an' hoe—
'Deed an' trufe I was a mighty likely man,
But time has bar'd my crown,
An' it's bent me to'ads de groun',
An' dars monst'ous little lef' of Uncle Dan.

'Deed I used to hoe de cawn
Fur ole marster, dead an' gone,
An' he hilt me up de leader of his ban',
But now he's gone away,

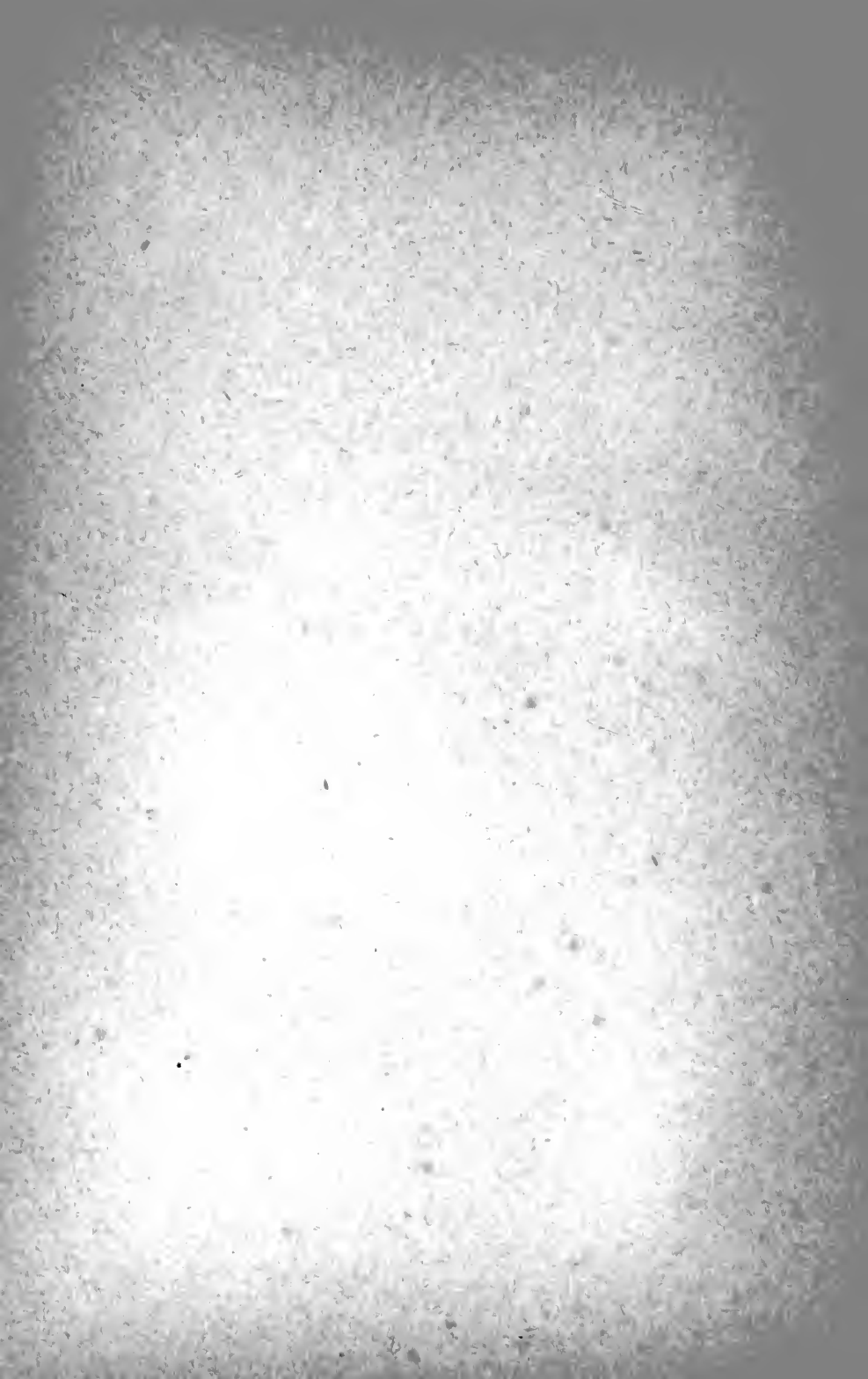
To a better lan', I pray,
Whar I trus' he's gwine to meet his niggah Dan.

VII.

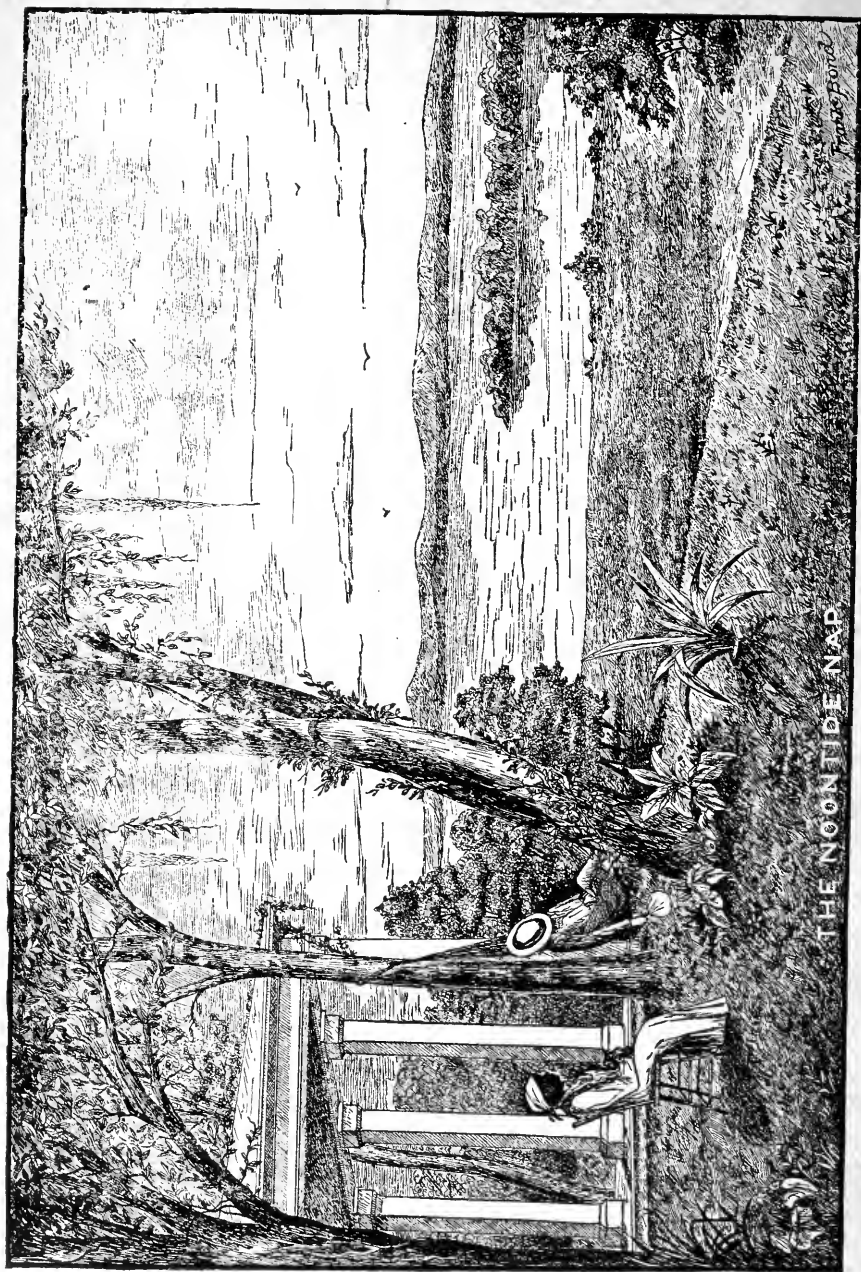
These poor souls were actors through
The story I shall sing for you,
In rhyme of heartfelt, homely flow,
A story of the long ago;
To give a glimpse of sunny days,
Along the flower-bordered ways;
In grassy fields and bowered nooks;
Beside the streams and crystal brooks;
Beneath the grand magnolia's shade;
'Mid perfume by its flowers made,
That laden gratefully the breeze;
And where the stillicide of bees
Was heard, in deep and drowsy hum,
Like strutting peacock's muffled thrum;
Where uncaged birds sang high in air,
And all was bright and fresh and fair,
Beneath the blue and ether dome
That arched a happy South-land home.

Round such a picture, such a scene,
Where “mammy” reigned, a dusky queen,
’Mid graceful girls and manly boys,
Who gave her care, or brimmed her joys,
I’d twine, of song, a garland sweet,
And beg to lay it at thy feet.





CANTO II.



THE NOONTIDE NAP

THE NOONTIDE NAP
FRANCIS BORD

CANTO SECOND.

I.

DOWN SOUTH.

'TIS summer in the quiet land of bloom,
'Neath skies that winter never knew;
In forests deep the dusky cypress plume
Nods where the wild-vine tendrils clew
Among the humbler growth, beneath the shade
Of centuried and hoary oaks,
And where the rainbow-tinted sunbeams fade,
Under the long and trailing cloaks,
Of mosses, bannered to the lofty boughs,
That weave a close and leafy screen
For nooks where fly-begoaded cattle browse,
In covers cool, of grateful green.

II.

Before the facade of the deep, dark wood,
The fallow-fields and pastures lie,
And ripening harvests, teeming, rich and good,
Give pleasing promise to the eye.

Among the china and the orange trees,
And flowers of myriad dye,
And jasmine vines, that in each balmy breeze
Their gay and golden showers fly,
There stands, with open doors, a planter's home,
And stillness reigns about its halls,
Except the sound of bees around the comb,
Or ring-dove's low and distant calls.

III.

The sunflower droops in comely grace
Before the day-king's fervid rays—
A Clytie fair, who bends her modest face
Beneath Apollo's ardent gaze.
A shimmering haze is in the air,
The mocking bird his riot stills,
The river glints beneath the sun's fierce glare,
And mists hang o'er the far-off hills.
The pigeons croon beneath the eaving-frieze,
A kitten sleeps in "mammy's" lap,
And in a hammock, swung betwixt two trees,
"Old marster" takes his noon-tide nap.

IV.

THE STRANGER.

'Twas hazy, dreamy summer time
In Mississippi's ardent clime,
And I had wandered gladly back
From war and desolation's track,
And years of toil in fortune's hunt;
Bescarred before the battle's brunt;
Had wandered back, gray-haired and lame,
To that old home from whence I came,
Near two-score years before, a lad
Of lightsome step, and spirits mad
With wild ambition, but to wield
A gleaming blade on vict'ry's field,
And bear the Southern banner through
The broken ranks of hostile blue.
I met a grim and stubborn foe,
And saw my cherished cause laid low;
I fell amid a rain of balls,
And 'woke within a prison's walls.
I've lived the dear "Lost Cause" to weep,
And joyed to see the trouble sleep;

I live to praise the God above—
The God of Peace, and Home, and Love—
That now our land is One, and Free,
And pray that thus 'twill ever be.

V.

Capricious fortune could not foil
The just reward of worthy toil;
So there, within the well-known gates—
Despite the Furies and the Fates—
I stood upon the shaded lawn,
Beside the grave of years ago.
A man of wrinkles, but of wealth,
In gold, and gear, and ruddy health.
My father's sire dozed his nap,
The kitten slept in mammy's lap,
The pigeons crooned beneath the eaves,
The zephyrs played among the leaves,
And on the breezes, borne along,
Came faint the ring-doves' cooing song.
Till "marster" woke, I thought the while
"Black mammy's" gossip to beguile.

A safe incognito was mine,
In beard, and hair, and furrowed line,
That Time had lent me from his stall
To freely clothe myself withal.
I laughed and cried, to hear her tell
Afresh the tale I knew so well—
Forebore to hug the dear old soul
Till she had reached her story's goal.

MAMMY'S STORY.

Yo' mos' o-be jent, sah; hit's true
Dis place is known, sah, ez Ladue—
De fines' on de rivah;
An' dat's ole marster dar, asleep;
I wouldn't wake him for a heap—
He's sich a reg'lar livah.

But ef you'd seat yo'se'f a bit,
Do' Ise no comp'ny dat is fit
To ontertain you well, sah,
I'll do my bes' tell marster wakes—
And dat I knows fur sartain sakes,
Is wid de dinnah-bell, sah.

Yes, sah, he's livin' here alone,
Asceptin' color like my own;
Ole mis' is gone to glory,
An' all de yuthers dey's away,
But not fur good, er gwine to stay—
An' dar-by hangs a story;

Ole marse an' mis', dey had a son—
Marse Luther, jis an on'y one—
An' also one sweet darter;
Marse Luther married; den he died,
An' his po' wife—jis' seem she tried—
Lay 'side him shortly arter.

She lef' a lovely par of twins,
An' jis' as like as two new pins,
Asceptin'—is you lis'nin'?—
Dat one wuz gal and one wuz boy;
Miss Genevieve and Marster Roy
Dey named 'em at de chris'nin'.

Ole marster's darter runned away,
An' f'um dat awful, tryin' day,

Ole mis' she tuck to sinkin',
An' 'twarn't but jes' a few months mo'
She stood upon de Jordan sho',
From golden cups a-drinkin'.

'Twas on a Sunday mistiss went;
It 'peared de angel hos' wuz sent
To take her up to heaven,
Dat one day, when de gates up dar
Is standin' open, wide ajar—
De bes' day in de seven.

De fac', it wuz, dat po' Miss Sue
She loved beneath what Marse Ladue
Wuz thinkin' wuz her ekal;
An' so she 'loped, one rainy night,
An' evah sence wuz lost to sight.
Sah? Yes, sah, dat's de sekal.

I'd nussed Marse Luther and Miss Sue,
An' den I tuck Marse Luther's two;
Now, bless yo' life, Miss Veevey
Has got some six; an' when dey's here

Dey makes ole mammy jump, s'vere—
You jis' had better b'lieve me!

Well, arter young Marse Luther died,
His wife a-layin' by his side,
An' po' Miss Sue elopin',
An' mistiss ridin' Jordan's wave,
Ole marster's life wuz hard to save—
De doctors guv up hopin'.

But, bless yo' life, he stood it all;
De angel stopped his bugle-call,
An' marster's still among us;
An' sence dat time he's strong an' well,
An' nothin' but de Lawd could tell
De happiness he's brung us.

So things went on, year arter year,
An' all wuz smooth and prosp'rous here;
De cullud folks increasin';
De cawn crap an' de cotton bale
Wuz sho', an' nevah known to fail,
An' blessin's wuz onceasin'.

An' jes' to cap de stack of joy,
Dar cum along anuther boy,
 One blessed day like dis'n;
I think de angels ovah dar
Mus' be'n a-singin' in de a'r
 An' c'ressin' an' a-kissin'.

Up f'um de hot an' dusty way
Dat 'long de rivah levee lay,
 Dat bar'foot boy come, swingin';
He whistled, as he trudged along,
Some snatches f'um a lively song
 He'd hyrd de fiel'-han's singin'.

Up thoo de lawn an' 'twixt de trees,
Jes' like a spring-time rivah breeze,
 Dat youngster comes a-troopin'—
I think he had de boldes' step
A tired infant evah kep',
 An' nary bit er droopin'.

Den he unloosened f'um his back
A little ole bandana pack

Dat hilt his onknown treasure;
F'um off his arm his bundle swung,
An' on de grass hisse'f he flung,
Full length, his little measure.

Ole marster woke, an' quar surprise
Jes' twinkled in his good ole eyes
To see de youthful ranger;
"Go fetch de lad to me," he said;
Aunt Easter jis' went right ahead
Wid dis talk to de stranger:

"Come here to me, you little scamp;
I 'spec's you's nuthin but a tramp
A-prowlin' thoo de section;
Ole marster wants to talk wid you,
An' sorter s'arch you thoo and thoo,
An' give you some correction.

I 'spec's he'll lock you up until
De night am come, an' all am still;
Den, while you quake an' shivah,
He'll make de drivah take you out

An' give you sixty—dar about—

An' fling you in de rivah."

Ole Easter thought it monst'ous smart

To give some one jis' sich a start,

When she wuz in de humor;

Ghos'-stories, laws! she loved to tell,

An' all dis truck 'bout hoodoo spell,

An' every 'sterious rumor.

Out spoke de brave, onda'nted lad:

"I don't believe dat he's so bad

As you gwine try to make him;

An' what is mo', I aint afeared"—

Dat's what he said, for hit I heard—

Dar warn't no skeer could shake him.

"You's pooty spunky, little man;

But when you's in ole marster's han

You'll sing anudder song, sah;

So grab you up yo' traps an' truck,

An' pray" ole Easter say, "fur luck,

As you is gwine along, sah."

She led de lad to whar de fat
An' jolly-faced ole marster sat,
 On dis yer same piazzah;
"I dunno whar dis chile is f'um,
Er why er wharfo' here he's cum,
 Er any 'skuse he has, sah."

Den pompously, her jewty done,
Ole Easter looks up to'ads de sun,
 As ef to tell de hour,
Den takes de dinnah-hawn an blows
A blast dat might er skeered de crows,
 Er brought a summer shower.

"Well, youngster," says de kine ole man,
"Jis tell me, ef you thinks you can,
 Yo' name, an whar you wander."
"My name is Frank," de boy replied;
"Ten days ago my father died,
 An' mother's Over Yonder."

Den, lookin' to'ads de cl'ar, blue skies,
De tear-drops wet his bluer eyes

An' dimmed dar boyish brightness;
Ole marster's tone got safter, too,
While gazin' in dem eyes of blue,
An' drapped his manner's lightness.

"I'd like to get some work to do—
Dat's why I come to visit you,"
De wanderer continued;
Jis' den de han's, who'd heard de hawn,
Comes trapesin' in f'um out de cawn,
Hard-handed, strong an' sinewed.

"You see dem men?" old marster said;
"Dey labors for dere daily bread,
An' yit dey's well contented;
Could you do dat, thoo all yo' days,
An' live dere humble, drudgin' ways,
Widout de choice repented?"

"One only gits what he can 'arn,"
De boy he says, "but I can l'arn
To be a helpful man, sah;
Jis' try me for a little while."

Dis broadened out ole marster's smile,
Bekase he liked de ansah.

"Come here, Sis Tabb;" dat's me; Ise here;
An' standin' by ole marster's cheer,
I mos' o-be-jent waited;
An' yit I'm here, devoted still,
An' ready, too, to do his will
Whenever hit is stated.

He say: "Sis Tabb, you take dis boy,
An' bring him up wid our Roy,
Wid jis' de same attention;
See dat he's fed an' neatly dressed,
An' do in all things what is bes'—
De res' I needn't mention."

I tuck a likin' to de chile
Right dar an' den; an' arter while
I has him lookin' shinin';
Den guv him somepen good to eat—
You'd tho't dat he'd be'n ouden meat
Ef you could seed him dinin'.

He brung his appetite fur sho',
An' et until he'd hold no mo'—
 An' me, laws bless you, pressin';
De chile wuz hawngry, dat's a fac'—
He hadn't et fur weeks aback,
 Wuz jis what I wuz guessin'.

I aint no reader in de books,
But still I knowed from dat chile's looks,
 He warn't no common creature;
He'd gentle ways and manners sweet,
An' 'ristocratic hands and feet,
 An' "blood" in every feature.

He guv his little pack to me,
To keep it safe as safe could be;
 "My mother's Bible's in it—
Hit's somepen I most dearly prize,"
He says, wid big tears in his eyes;
 I loved him f'um dat minit.

I locked dat bundle safe an' soun'
Down in a chis' dat's i'on-boun',

An' dar it stayed in res', sah,
Tell sich a time, in arter years,
It dried a monst'ous sight er tears,
An' 'splained things fur de bes', sah.

He fell right into our ways,
An' 'twarn't so monst'ous many days
Fo' he wuz in a station
'Mong all de white folks on de place,
As well as dem of our race,
As one of de relation.

An' him an' Roy an' Genevieve
Jis' had good times, you kin believe—
Ole marster, too, abettin';
Sich kyarin's-on an' rattlin' plays
I nevah seed in my bawn days,
An' kep' me wile a-frettin'.

An' Juba, too—dat's my ole man—
Him an' his brother—Uncle Dan—
'Would mix in de commotion,
An' lead de racket, whoop an' dance,

Whenever dey had half a chance—
Distractin', to *my* notion.

Ise raised some chillen in my time,
An' mos' of dem was fair to prime,
Of white and black vocations;
But dese wuz p'intedly de wust
Of any dis chile evah nussed,
Of three whole ginerations.

Hit warn't in meanness dey wuz bad,
But hoyden-wile an' mischuff-mad,
An' full of fun an' capers;
To make dem chillen walk de chalk
An' keep in boun's—you hear me talk—
Hit wuzn't in de papers.

De yeahs went on, an' I tell you,
De tricks dem chillen played, hit's true,
You couldn't hardly thunk it;
One time dey tuck Aunt Easter's cat,
An' wropped it in her Sunday hat,
An' in de rivah sunk it.



Aunt Easter worried so dat—well,
She thought she had a hoodoo spell,
 An' so tuck down, er ailin';
She 'clared she knowed dat snakes an' toads
Wuz in her legs by basket-loads,
 An' jis' kep' on a-failin',

Tell Frank an' Roy an' Uncle Dan
Dey gits a monst'ous big tin pan
 An' fills it full er vermin—
Some fishin'-wu'ms an' harmless snakes,
An' frogs, an' thousan'-legs—an' takes
 De mess right in, a-squirmin'.

Dey hides it onder Easter's bed,
An' den Marse Frank he up an' said
 How he was hoodoo p'ison;
He takes ole Easter by de ha'r,
An' goes thoo some owdashus pra'r,
 Den brings her up a-risin'.

An' den he makes ole Uncle Dan
Hol' up de things in dat ar pan

Befo' de eyes of Easter,
An' make believe dey lef' her lim'
In true o-be-jence unto him,
An' hoodoo had released her.

'Fo' dat she b'leeved, as sho's you bawn,
Dat Gab'el done had blowed his hawn,
An' she wuz sho'ly dyin';
Dat trick jis' kyoed her right away,
An' 'arly on de follerin' day
She jis' was out a-flyin'.

Mos' evah Sunday all de han's
On dese an' de adj'inin' lan's
Dat's by dese rivahs bounded,
Would gether 'fo' sweet Jesus' face,
Out in de woods, in some cool place,
To hear de gospel 'spounded.

An' in sich times dem chillen went,
An' allers dere sweet voices lent
To holp de meetin'-singin';
An' even yit I think I hear

Dem chillen's voices, bright and clear,
All thoo de sarvice ringin'.

De preachah, he wuz my ole man;
De deekin, dat wuz Uncle Dan;
An' while de folks wuz comin'
Dese two sot on de moanah's seat,
Mos' humble dar at Jesus' feet,
Dis openin' hime a-hummin':

GOOD LORD, REMEMBER ME.

I wish dat you, my breethren true,
Would larn dis modis' song,
An' git it by heart, 'fo' we all part,
An' shout it loud an' long:
'Member de rich, an' 'member de po',
'Member de bon' an' de free,
An' when you done a-'memberin' aroun',
Den, good Lawd, 'member po' me.

Why can't you do like Peter did,
While a-walkin' on de sea?

He clapped his han's to his lovin' Lawd—

Oh, good Lawd, 'member po' me.

Josh-u-way made de sun stan' still

Tell de hos' of de wrong wuz slain;

Den he went on, fightin' for de Lawd,

An' prayin' for remembrance again.

Ef I could stan' whar Moses stood,

An' view de landscape o',

I'd take up wings an' fly away

Ovah to dat milk-white sho'.

My chillen—sho'ly dey wuz mine—

Growed up together, jis' as fine

As any in de county;

Good-hearted, han'some, strong an' brave,

Dey holp de po', all dey could save,

From Gran'pa's wealth an' bounty.

Ole marster didn't stint his means,

But sont away to New Orleans

An' got a private teachah—
A man so good an' wise an' straight
I allers thought he'd do fust-rate
To make a Babtis' preachah.

Dey larnt so much, an' growed so fas',
Hit made me sad—I knowed at las',
An' so'ly felt de warnin',
Dey gwine too leave me, too, an' go
Out in de worl' to reap an' sow,
Some monst'ous 'arly mawnin'.

Den one thing please me mighty well;
One night I ovahearn Frank tell
Miss 'Veevey how he love her;
He talk so sweet about his love,
An' sw'ar dat she's his turkle-dove,
By all de stars above her,

Hit made me smile. Ise hearn dat talk
Mos' evah sense dat I could walk,
Thoo all dese ginerations;
But dat's de talk—you knows it, too—

Dat helps dis world of ourn thoo,

An' populates de nations.

Den Roy he fines de secret out,

An' raves, an' stawms, an' t'ars about,

Mos' dre'ful, to my notion.

An' marster p'intedly goes wile,

An' sw'ar he gwine to shoot de chile.

An' rages like de ocean.

Dey rave at Frank, an' fume an' sizz,

An' say dey dunno who he is,

An' treat him monst'ous bad, sah;

But Frank he kep' his tempah down—

He even doan' so much as frown,

But jis' look sorter sad, sah.

An' den dey tells him, to his face,

He done has got to leave de place;

An' den he look heart-broken,

An' say he nevah could believe

'Twuz wrong to love Miss Genevieve—

He say it sah, outspoken.

But still he packed an' went away,
An' jis' about de follerin' day

Miss Genevieve wuz missin'.

Laws bless you! Roy, an' marster, too,
Wuz monst'ous hot; now, I tell *you*,
Dey jis' wuz fa'rly hissin'.

An' marster sw'ar he b'lieve a cuss,
Or somepen', maybe, dat is wuss,
Wuz on de house a-layin,
An' Roy, he gwine ter take a gun
An' shoot dat Frank, 'fo' mawnin' sun—
Dat's what he wuz a-sayin'.

Den I comes up, an' mighty peart,
'Kase I doan' want dem chillen hurt,
An' say it mos' severely:
"I b'lieve, as firm as any rock,
Dat Frank aint f'um no common stock,
An' b'lieve it mos' sincerely."

Den marster look at me as *cool*,
An' say he think dat I'm a fool—

In fac', he simply know it;
He say, wid anger in his eyes,
"Ef you's so mighty, monst'ous wise,
Why doan' you try to show it?"

Right dar an' den de wises' thought
Dis po' ole niggah evah caught
Went thoo my head a-flyin'.
Down to de quarters, sah, I went,
Jis' like a doctah who wuz bent
To see somebody dyin'.

I busted open dat ole chis'
An' to de bottom run my fis'
An' dug up dat bandanner
What Frank had guv to me befo',
Wid all his trinkets, years ago,
An' shouted one hosanner;

I dunno why dat I wuz led
To git de notion in my head;
But I was sho' possessed, sah,
De Bible in dat little pack

Would bring dem wand'rin' chillen back
In marster's favor dressed, sah.

I tuck dat pack an' fa'rly flew,
Like dese ole limbs wuz young an' new,
An' 'stonished all dat seed me;
Dey think Ise crazy, but I run
Like Jacob gwine ter meet his son;
I mosied—yes, indeedy!

Clean outen breath, an' almos' beat,
I flung de pack at marster's feet,
An' Roy, he den ontied it;
De Bible, hit wuz on de top;
You orter seed ole marster stop
As soon, sah, as he 'spied it.

Wid trimblin' han' he tuck de book,
An' at de fus' page tuck a look,
Den shouted "Hallalooyah!"
He read some words dat went like dis:
"To my dear darter, wid a kiss,"
An' dat wuz signed "Ladue," sah!

Den lower down, Miss Sue had writ,
In her sweet way, a little bit,

To give it to anuther:

“To Frank, my noble little son,
My darlin boy an’ only one,
From his fond, lovin’ mother.”

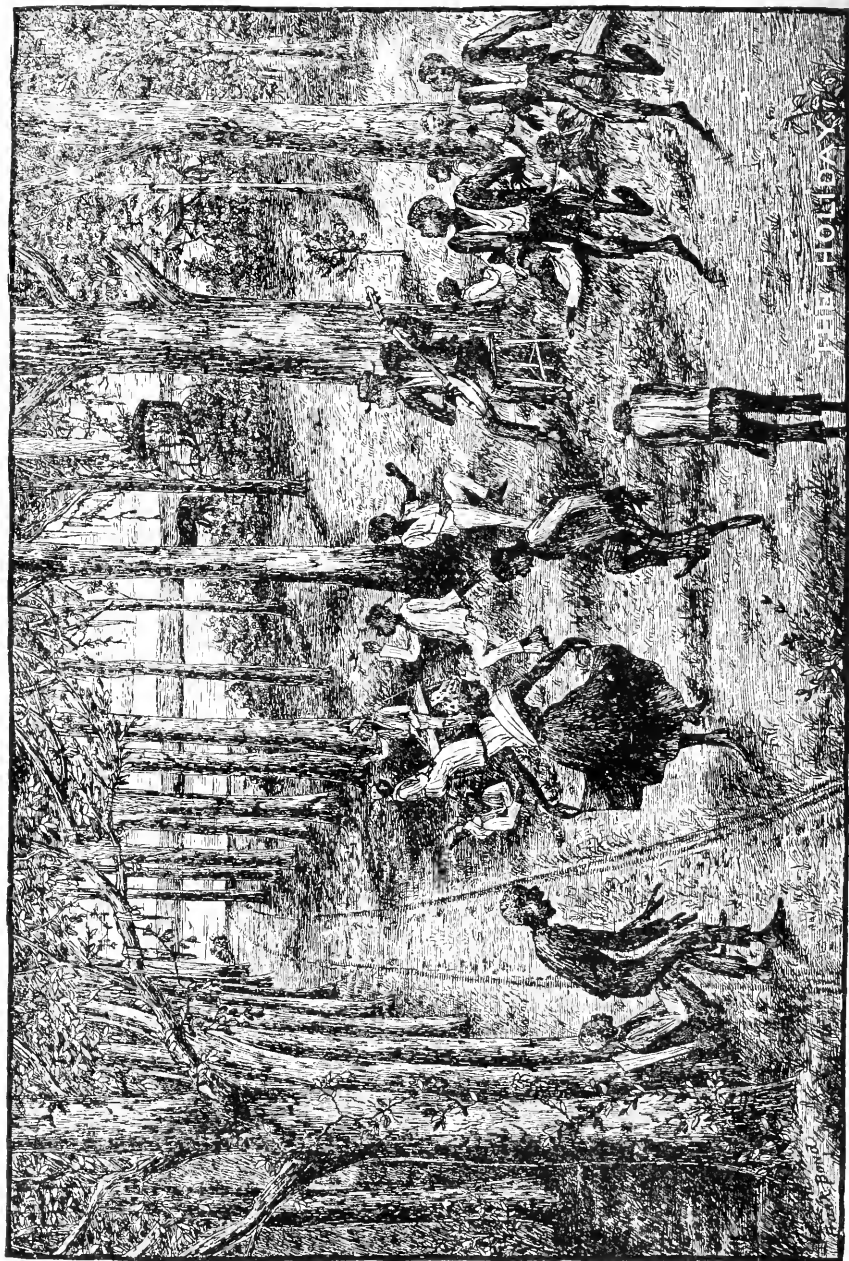
De shootin’ talk den tuck a change,
An’ Roy an’ marster ’gin to ’range

To smooth de trouble ovah,
An’ pooty soon de los’ wuz foun’;
An’ when de weddin’ feas’ went roun’
De darkies wuz in clovah.

Laws bless you! sah, hit made me glad
To see de gorjus times we had—

Sich joy an’ merry-makin’;
Ole marster p’intedly growed young,
An’ whooped an’ laughed, an’ danced an’ sung—
But, dar, he is awakin’!

CANTO III.



CANTO THIRD.

A PICTURE.

I.

BRIGHT boyhood time—its holidays and
toys;

Its sorrows, great, as seen through youthful
eyes;

Its earnest plans, its sweet and satiate joys;

Ah! dulcet season! how it flies,

And then embalmed in mem'ry lies.

II.

“Black Mammy” held its picture up to me—

An etching traced in lines of living light,
And limned in colors lucent as the sea

When 'neath the moonbeams soft and bright
It shimmers in a tropic night.

III.

I caught the dear old soul within my arms;
Embraced her with an ecstasy of joy,
As lover would a mistress rich of charms;
She wondered; then exclaimed, "My boy?
God bless us! you is Marster Roy!"

THE HOLIDAY.

I.

"Ole marster" opened wide his dyes,
That filled with ludicrous surprise,
And hardly thought himself awake,
To see a bearded stranger take
Such freedom on his grounds.
"Hit's Marster Roy!" old Mammy cried,
And tears of joy, in welling tide,
Flowed down her dusky, wrinkled face,
And Grandpa gave me his embrace
With love that knew no bounds.

II.

No better welcome ever ran
To chieftain from his loyal clan,

Than that which, given there to me
Beneath my father's old roof-tree,
Brought gladness to my heart.
With youth my grandsire seemed anew;
He took the dinner-horn and blew
A mighty blast, that echoed long,
And sudden stopped the freedmen's song,
And gave Old Home a start.

III.

'Twas something strange to call the hands,
At such a time, from off the lands—
With loyal fear of something wrong
To those at home, the dusky throng
Rushed in the nearest way.
“Ole marster” told them that his boy,
His long-lost grandson, “Marster Roy,”
Had come to home and friends again;
“And now,” he said, “let pleasure reign—
I give a holiday.”

IV.

A general shout the welkin rung,
And then the darkies danced and sung—

One grave old minstrel tuned his shell—

A gourd banjo—most wondrous well

To sing a home-made song.

The “big house” furnished goodly cheer

Of “white bread,” jam and “simmon beer,”

And, all impatient for the rhyme,

The folks urge Cato, “Come to time!—

Doan’ chune de thing so long.”

V.

BANJO SONG.

Has you be’n hyrd de banjo talk?

Choonka-ching, choonka-ching;

An’ see de niggah walk de chalk?

An’ see de niggah lif’ his feet

To dat music, rich an’ sweet?

Choonka-ching, choonka-ching.

Oh dat banjo—make us lif’ dem feet;

Oh dat possum—good an’ fat an’ sweet;

De niggah like to have a chance

To ’possum-hunt an’ sing an’ dance—

Choonka-ching, choonka-ching.

Has you be'n hyrd de drivah sw'ar?

Choonka-ching, choonka-ching;

An' raise de niggah's kinky ha'r?

An' see de niggah make de hoe

Hum along de cotting row?

Choonka-ching, choonka-ching.

Oh dat drivah—make us lif' dem feet;

Oh dat cane-fiel'—big an' broad an' sweet;

What de niggah like to shun

Am hoein in de br'ilin' sun—

Choonka-ching, choonka-ching.

VI.

When Cato's banjo song was done,

The "jawbone talkers'" work begun,

And wagers high, of shucking pegs,

And raven claws and rabbit legs,

And other current pelf,

Were laid in many an odd, queer batch

On this most unique singing match,

Wherein each rival, in his time,

Would sing, in certain tune, a rhyme,
Invented by himself.

VII.

In such a contest, holding out
The longest in the rhyming bout,
Established high the dusky bard,
As winner, in the tierce and guard,
Of wordy, sing-song fight.
Old Cato, Cæsar, Luke and Eph
Were of the talkers now the chief,
And, judged by Jube and Uncle Dan,
Their doggerel diversely ran
Thus, wildly, to its height:

VIII.

LUKE:

Whenever I gits started in
I talks jawbone tell hit's a sin;
I talked jawbone from June tell June,
An' some folks said I quit too soon.

• *Refrain*—Ole Jawbone, do go home;
In come Jim wid a josey on.

CÆSAR:

It aint no use to try to quit
When I falls in de jawbone fit;
I talks so long, an' talks so fas'
I comes out winner at de las'.

EPH:

You works a middlin' size hockbone,
Wid a good big chunk er hot cawn-pone,
Heap better dan de jawbone song;
You hear my sesso; gwine along.

CATO:

I talked jawbone till Chris'mus come,
An' den had jis got started some;
So hush yo' talk an' hear me sing,
An' make de banjo fa'rly ring.

LUKE:

Ole alligator on a log,
Holdin' talk wid a big bull-frog:
De alligator up an' say
How dis a monst'ous pooty day.

CÆSAR:

Frog look wise an' say, "Jis' so;"
He's gwine down to de grocery sto'
To buy some sugar fur to eat,
He got a toof so monst'ous sweet.

EPH:

Ole alligator say he's sad,
An' feelin' mighty pow'ful bad;
What give him sich a sorry look,
He done gone loss his pocket-book.

CATO:

Ole Mistah Frog, he up an' 'low
He doan' like po' folks anyhow;
De alligator give one jump
An' swaller bull-frog in a lump.

LUKE:

Now tell me, niggahs, ef you know,
Of eatin' things de bes' dat grow;
I flings a quarter up dat Eph,
On eatin' truck am 'bout de chief.

EPH:

Well, fus' come fresh young 'possum meat,
Wid yaller yams, so good an' sweet,
An' den spring chicken, rich an' fat,
An' water-millions arter dat.

CATO:

No, sah; doan' think dat Ise a dunce,
To bet 'gin him dat names, at once,
Mos' evah thing dar is on earth,
'Cept what aint mo' dan fo'pence worth.

IX.

THE GOVERNOR.

And so they went in endless rhyme—
The other darkies keeping time
And "pattin' juba," swinging round,
Or rolling on the grassy ground,
 Beneath the shady trees;
When suddenly the merry peals
Of fun were checked by carriage-wheels,
The sound of which came rattling through
The trees along the avenue,
 Borne on the balmy breeze.

X.

“De Guv’ner’s come!” a dozen cried,
And all, bare-headed, stood beside
The clean and winding gravel drive,
To see the honored guest arrive,
 And help his party down.
Two handsome drags drew up before
The mansion’s wide, inviting door;
From one a troop of children light,
With joyous faces, clear and bright,
 And eyes of blue and brown.

XI.

From out the other carriage came
A man of noble mien and frame;
Then following, a matron fair,
With Genevieve’s brown eyes and hair—
 The father and the mother.
My grandsire’s eyes were bright with joy;
Presenting me, he said, “Sir Roy,
This is the Governor of the State,
And this the helpful wife and mate
 To Frank, your foster brother.”

XII.

Such greetings, and such love and joy,
Such happiness without alloy,
As filled the dear old homestead then,
Are never writ by mortal pen,
 But by the angels sung.
With merry memories, the day
On Pleasure's wings flew fast away,
And night's dark mantle, star-begemmed,
And forest-fringed, horizon-hemmed,
 Was o'er the heavens flung.

XIII.

In blest reunion, late that night,
We sat within the soft twilight
Of brightest stars, beneath the trees,
And in the perfume-laden breeze
 That played, the leaves among.
White-haired old mammy's heart was filled
So full, her loving lips were stilled,
When Frank took Cato's rude old shell,

And in a voice like silver bell,
So softly, sweetly sung:

XIV.

THE GOVERNOR'S SONG.

Oh Genevieve! my darling queen,
I hear all day thy dear old songs,
And with them comes each happy scene
That with their memory belongs.
I hear the notes of "Dixie's Land,"
And "Swanee River's" tender air,
"La Marseillaise," so strong and grand,
The pathos of the "Maiden's Prayer."

Oh Genevieve! sweet Genevieve!
The years may come, the years may go,
But still 'round thee shall memory weave
The dear old songs of long ago.

Oh Genevieve! my darling wife,
I bless the day that brought me here,
And that when you became the life
And soul of all that I hold dear.

The pomp and pride of high estate;
The honors that to rank belong,
Will ever in my bosom wait
To hear from thee one dear old song.

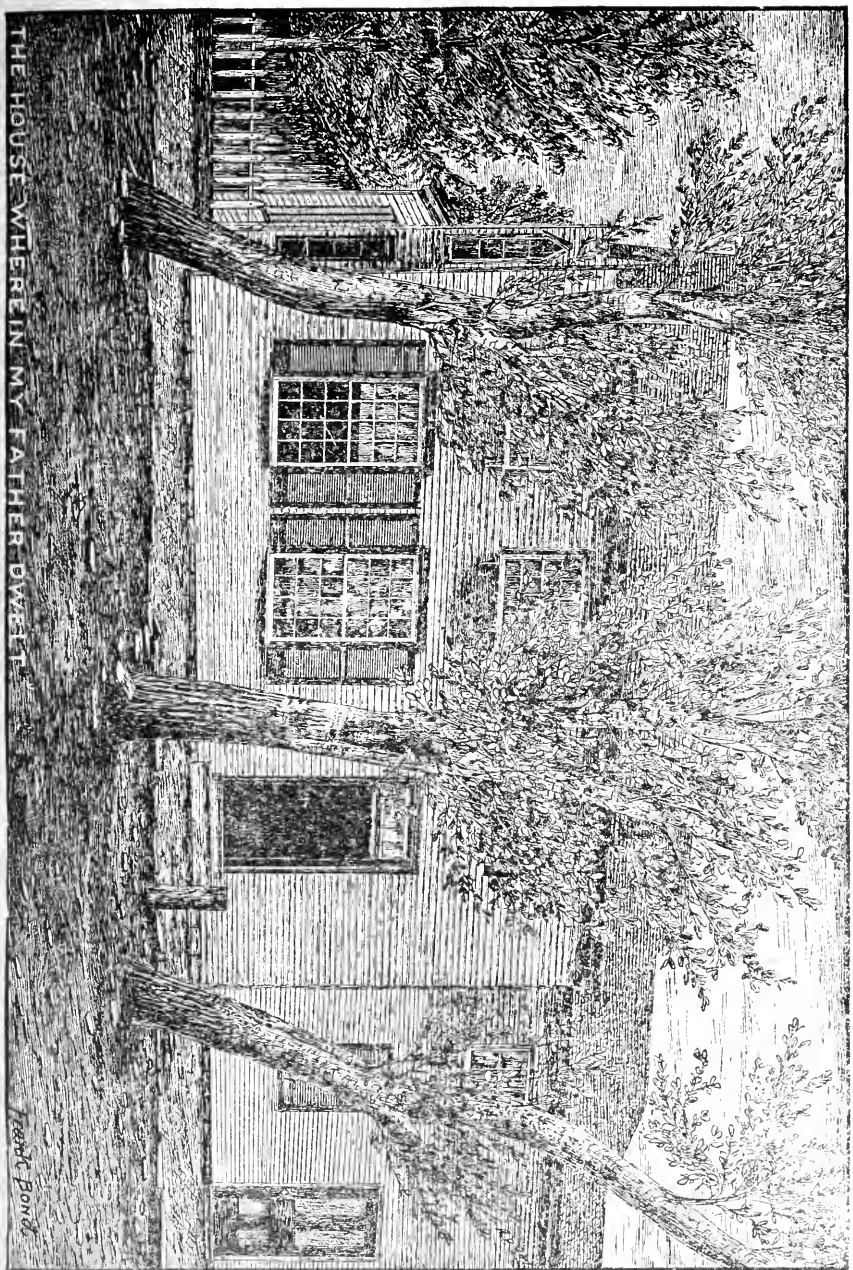
XV.

GOOD-BYE.

And now, good-bye, old Southern home,
And rest thee, Southern harp.
Through all the world I'm called to roam,
Where winds are chill and sharp.
Thy shell shall be my solace sweet
When to the heart I turn,
And Memory will hold complete,
Home-love within her urn.



MY VILLAGE HOME.



THE HOUSE WHEREIN MY FATHER DWELLT

FRANCIS BOND

MY VILLAGE HOME.

TO HON. JOHN CHARLES THOMPSON.

I N Memory's halls my dear old home,
And boyhood's bright and happy days,
Shall live with me where'er I roam,
And light me with their gladsome rays
Along life's hard and thorny ways.

Long years had passed, and many friends
Were wishing I would come again—
And others too—for Fate oft bends
Before the throne of years, like grain
Before the wind and hail and rain.

As thus a welcome I had earned
Of hearty, good, and kindly will,
With joy my wandering steps I turned,
And sought my old home on the hill,
And those who fondly loved me still.

Just where the turnpike rounds a ledge,
O'ergrown with flowers, turf and moss,
Where, underneath, a thick-set hedge
Caught many an autumn's heaps of dross,
That northwinds from the branches toss.

My heart was gladdened once again
By sight of what, in fitful gleams,
Had oft been pictured to my brain,
In slumber's fancy—blessed dreams—
My mountain home, its hills and streams.

The sun just tipped the trees with light ;
Their lengthening shadows fell by mine,
And in the far-off distance, bright
I saw the gleaming steeples shine,
And sunset gild the waving pine.

I gazed enraptured on the scene—
Below, the vale, beyond, the town
Just peeping through its leafy screen,
And stood there till the sun went down,
And darkness gathered all around.

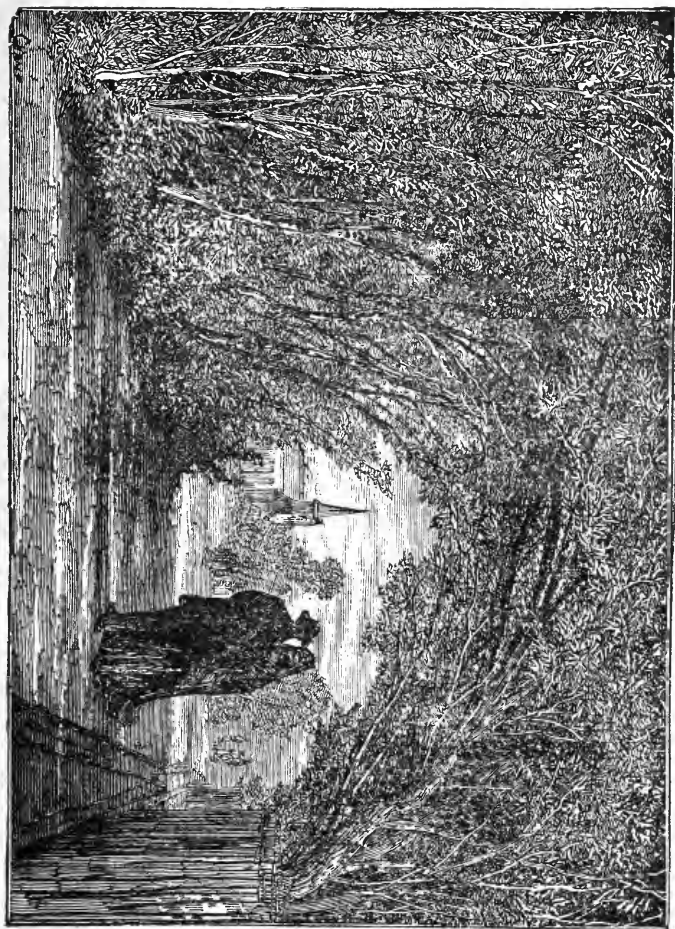
Then on with eager haste I bent—

Across the bridge and up the road,
And to my limbs new strength was lent,
And lighter grew my heavy load
As near and nearer home I strode.

The stage coach, and its weary four,
Came slowly up the stony hill,
And save the mill-dam's sullen roar,
The night was silent, calm and still;
Hushed e'en the music of the rill.

But when the driver wound his horn,
A hundred watch-dogs bayed aloud;
The hills threw back the notes in scorn,
And tower'd higher, darker-browed,
Beneath their crowns of silv'ry clouds.

I strolled on through the quiet street,
Where tall old trees, on either hand,
Wept dew-drops, bowed, and seemed to meet,
And sighed, while gentle breezes fanned
The face of this, my native land.



“Where oft I’d lingered sadly late.”

I stood a moment by the gate,
Before a little cottage door
Where oft I'd lingered sadly late
With one I loved in days of yore;
Love now, and shall forevermore.

A lamp within sent mellow light
Far out into the darkness wild,
And on the curtains, pure and white,
Were blent, in shadow-pictures mild,
A kneeling mother and her child.

I knew it was my heart's first love,
Whom bitter fate had torn from me—
To waft her orisons above,
She knelt, her child beside her knee—
It was my boy-love, Ella Gree.

Then lifted was my heart with hers,
To that bright realm beyond the sky,
Where angel voices, 'mid the spheres,
Chant "Blessed be the Lamb on High,"
In sweetly sounding symphony.

I prayed that Heaven's blessings should
Forever circle 'round her brow;
That smiling Fortune kindly would
Her life with gracious gifts endow,
And endless happiness allow.

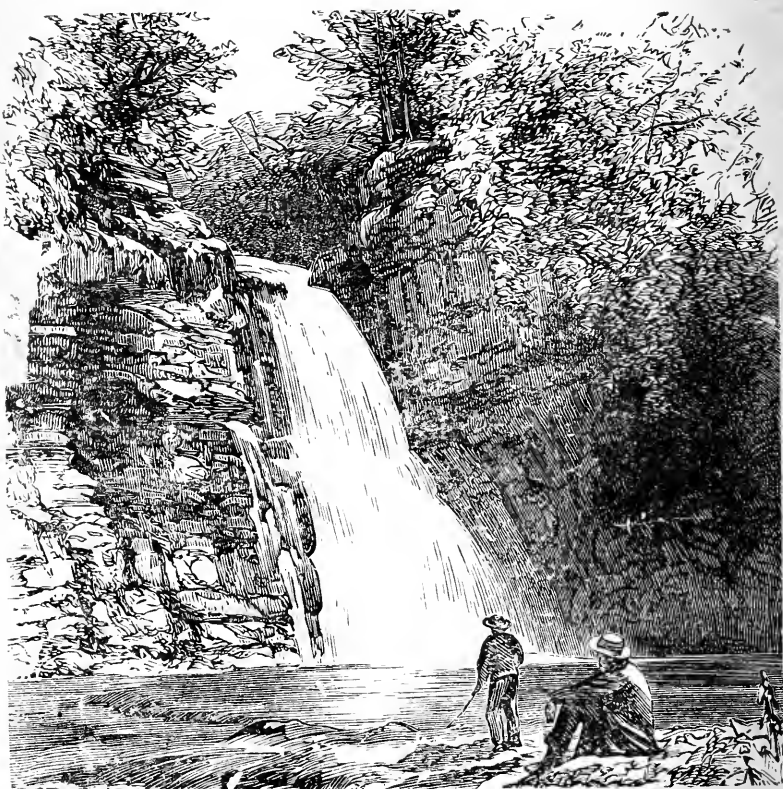
* * * * *

Of those who were my schoolmates dear.
With rosy cheeks and happy hearts,
I found them aged, worn and sere,
Engaged in wealth engendering arts
And chasing treasures in Life's marts.

Around them clustered boys and girls,
Just such as we in by-gone days;
Whose joyous shouts and dancing curls
Brought back to me, in halcyon rays,
That golden time which never stays.

I lived my young life o'er, among
The scenes my boyish days had known;
In sylvan aisles, where echoes rung
To laugh or shout, or mocking moan,
In clear and wild and startling tone.

Sometimes along the green hill slopes
I rambled with my schoolmates' boys,
And felt how Age bears off Youth's hopes,
And tramples o'er our vain-sought joys,
And bursts our airy bubble toys.



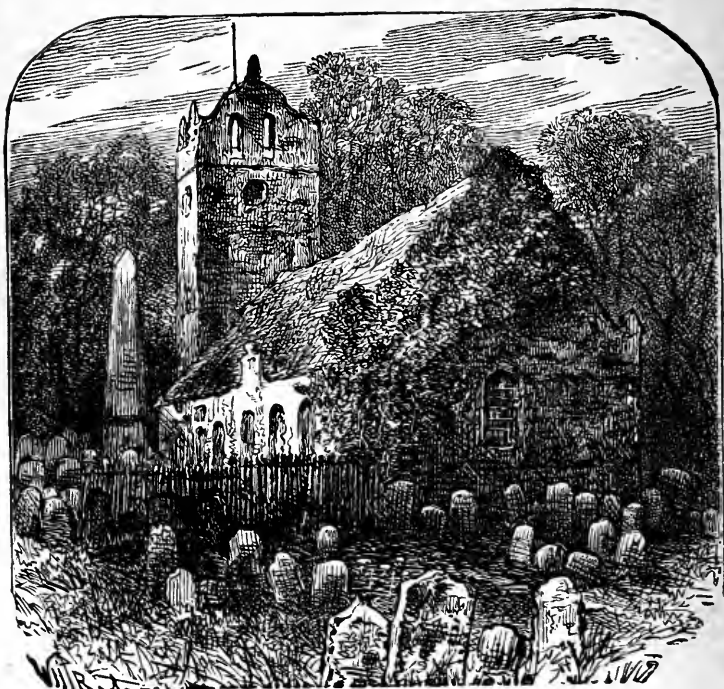
“'Twixt the hills with mighty bound.”

These little comrades led me 'round
A foot-path on the mountain side,
Where 'twixt the hills, with mighty bound,
A torrent flings its sparkling tide
Down to a lake, deep, blue and wide.

And then through caves; in brooks and mire;
O'er fallow-field; through wood and brake;
Now picking berries from the briar,
Or skipping stones upon the lake,
Or resting, for some laggard's sake.

Then through the graveyard, by the wood,
Where sweetly bloomed the wild vine rose;
There once a church and school-house stood;
There many dear-loved friends repose,
And still that old-time graveyard grows.

A thicket covers now the ground
That many a year had bloomed with corn,
Where, as a boy, I've followed round
The plowman, many a rosy morn,
And with him blessed the dinner horn.



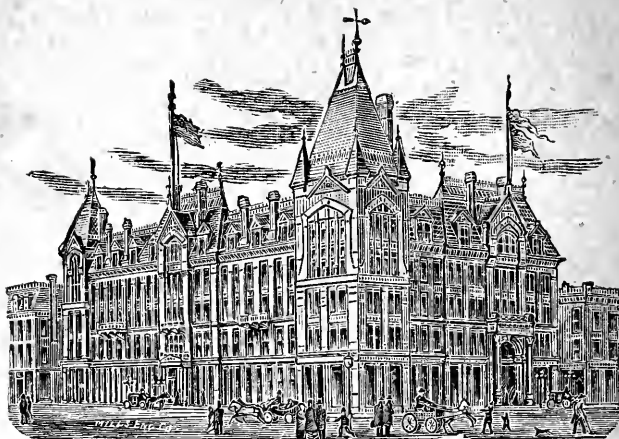
“And still that old-time graveyard grows.”

Old Winter's bleak and chilly wind,
And rattling sleet and driving rain,
A grand old forest used to find
On yonder broad and level plain,
Now covered o'er with golden grain.

The house wherein my father dwelt,
And where his father's head grew gray:
Beneath whose roof my mother knelt
And taught her children how to pray:
Has, like those loved ones, passed away.

Now, far from all, 'tis joy to think
Remembrance yet hath left her smiles,
My heart to home she still doth link;
Her potent hand blots out the miles,
And visions sweet my life beguiles.





A MODERN TEMPLE.

TO HON. H. A. W. TABOR, OF COLORADO.

NOT many short and fleeting years,
With all their hopes, and joys, and fears,
Have marched unhalting to the dead,
With steady, stern and silent tread,
Since o'er the hills and valleys here
The red man chased the panting deer,
And by the dark Missouri's tide
The warrior wooed his dusky bride;

Not long ago, where now we stand,
With blessings rich, on every hand,
The war-whoop through the forest rang,
Among the pines the wild winds sang;
The screams of eagles in the air
Met echo in the gray wolf's lair;
The bison, with his shaggy mane,
Grazed, all unharmed, upon the plain;
The paddle of the light canoe
Flashed where the water-lilies grew;
In nature's garb the land was drest,
From mountain's foot to craggy crest,
And all was fresh, untouched and wild,
The free home of the forest child.
But soon, from toward the rising sun,
Was heard the white man's axe and gun;
The forest bowed before his hand,
And as a garden bloomed the land;
The ploughshare turned the virgin soil,
And rich rewards repaid the toil
Of every hardy pioneer
Who built his humble cabin here.

Fair cities decked the boundless west,
And here, the fairest and the best
Sprang up, as if the builder's arm
Was aided by a magic charm,
And soon o'er hill, and vale and stream,
Was heard the wild and startling scream
Of swiftly-flying, fire-fed steed,
Dashing along at wondrous speed,
And scattering here, far and near,
Wealth and strength in his proud career.
And thus, among the gray foot-hills,
Spires and homes, and shops and mills
Have risen as though genii hands
Had wrought where this fair city stands.

The rarest of the glist'ning gems
That deck the city's brow—
The brightest in her diadem,
Is this we're setting now;
And he who gave this temple name,
Shall crown the beauteous queen,
And coming years shall sing his fame
And keep his memory green.

Each lovely Muse, who has a place
Within this temple grand,
His dreams, and waking thoughts, shall grace,
And bless his open hand;
For 'neath the sun, no fairer shrine,
Since Delphi, lost so long,
Was ever lifted to the Nine
Of Art, and Soul, and Song.

'Neath this broad dome, night after night,
For many a coming year—
'Neath all the golden, dazzling light,
From yon bright chandelier,
Shall come the man, the maid, the dame,
To drink from pleasure's cup,
And see the actor strive for fame,
And hold the mirror up.

The walking thoughts of Avon's bard,
His hero, king and clown,
His guileless maid, and bearded pard,
And monk, in cowl and gown,
Shall often picture, on this stage,

The passions, loves and hates,
Of every nation, land and age
Outside the pearly gates.

The soldier, lady-love and king,
Who came at Bulwer's call,
Shall make their gallant speeches ring
And echo through this hall,
And birds of song their notes shall trill
'Mid orange groves and palms,
And every heart shall feel the thrill
Of music's potent charms.

Here England's pursy Knight shall wince
Before the Windsor fays,
And Denmark's melancholy prince
Shall call his mimic plays,
And handle Yorick's fleshless pate,
And break Ophelia's heart,
And taming handsome, shrewish Kate,
Petruchio 'll play his part.

Here Lear, every inch a king,
Shall wear his monstrous woes,

And Juliet to her lover cling
Till death's releasing throes;
Macbeth shall rue his murd'rous deeds
In crime's entangling mesh,
And Shylock, with revengeful greed,
Demand his pound of flesh.

And hunch-back Richard, cruel, vile,
Shall meet his Richmond here,
And on great Cæsar's fun'ral pile
Shall fall the Roman tear.
The jealous Moor shall send above
Sweet Desdemona's soul,
And Pauline prove that woman's love
Outweighs the power of gold.

Bright tears of joy shall dim the eye
For Darling Jessie Brown,
Who hears, while others 'round her die,
The welcome slogan's sound.
Here poor old Rip shall totter in
To seek his little cot,

And find how, in Life's rush and din,
We are so soon forgot.

The earth, the sky, the boundless sea,
And every race and age,
Before these scenes shall gathered be
Upon this spacious stage.
Here Pleasure with her smiles shall bring
Surcease from daily cares,
And dullen Sorrow's sharpened sting,
And lift the woe she bears.



WAR WAIFS.



GRANT'S RETURN.

TO COL. JAMES JACKSON, SAN FRANCISCO.

It was the 20th day of September, 1879, that the gallant steamer "Tokio" hove in sight with the "man on horseback." It was the greatest day, in one sense, that San Francisco ever saw. The famous ex-President had been expected for two or three days, and the city was almost hid among evergreens, banners, streamers, flags, bunting, and decorations of every description appropriate to the occasion, and at the entrance to New Montgomery Street, between the Palace and Grand Hotels, a superb triumphal arch had been erected under which the hero would have to ride, at the head of the procession, to reach his quarters in the Palace. In the afternoon of the third day the "Tokio" was sighted from the Farralone Islands, a few miles out from the Golden Gate; the news was signaled to the Cliff House, six miles from the heart of the city, and from there was telegraphed to the authorities. In ten minutes every public bell in San Francisco was ringing and every whistle was screaming; such a din, of the kind, was never heard before on earth. The people rushed to the wharves, and to the hills overlooking the bay, in vast crowds; all of the craft that swarmed the bay turned toward the entrance; the military and civic societies, cornet bands and the like, for the grand parade, began to march for the Market Street ferry dock, where the distinguished party would land, and all of the vast mass

of humanity was collectively and individually wildly eager to see and honor the soldier guest. But it was night before the "Tokio" had cast anchor and the ferry steamer "Oakland" had taken General and Mrs. Grant and suite ashore. Then the procession began to move through the brilliantly lighted streets, which were packed with human beings for miles along the line of march. The mighty pageant moved for hours and the grand procession unwound itself like a monstrous serpent, but with all the miles and hours the left wing of the procession had not left the ferry dock when its right had made the tour of the city, and General Grant in a carriage, accompanied by Mayor Bryant, rode under the triumphal arch of natural flowers and into the courtyard of the Palace Hotel late at night.

Then old Uncle Josiah, who had been staying in the city several days to participate in the glorious affair, went home and told Aunt Jerusha all about it, somewhat after this style:

"**W**HAT did you see, good man of mine,
What did you see in town?

Sit down and tell it all to me,
And clear away that frown."

"I warn't a-frownin' at you, my dear,
My kind and good old wife;
But tell it all, I couldn't do,
To save your blessed life.

“My poor old head is all mixed up,
A-seein’ so many sights—
That makes the frown you see, my dear,
And stayin’ up o’ nights.

“I struck the town on Saturday morn,
And, bless me! what do you think?
The way ’twas dressed and capered out
Just made my old eyes wink.

“The flags were flyin’ everywhere,
Of every shape and kind,
And bunting flapped, and banners gay
Were waving in the wind.

“Across the streets and up the streets,
The good old flag was hung,
And everywhere I turned about,
The hero’s praise was sung.

“And walls so high, I couldn’t see
Just where they meant to stop,
Were hid with shields and evergreens,
Away up to the top.

“‘Honor the Brave’ and ‘Welcome Grant’—

Things meanin’ nigh the same—

And every other trick on earth,

To tell the hero’s fame,

“Clung to the houses, decked the doors

And waved on every hand—

In short the sight just simply was

Tremendu-us and grand.

“’Bout three and a half, in the afternoon,

There came the wildest clang—

The cannon boomed and whistles screamed,

And all the big bells rang.

“The people rushed, pell-mell, away

Towards the hills and docks,

In crowds and streams, and surging gangs,

Like sheep in frightened flocks.

“The hills that overlooked the bay

Were packed like swarms of bees,

And all the ships were thronged with men,

Like leaves upon the trees.

“But Kurnel Jim, our brave young friend,
Took me right in his ‘coop’,
And away we went down to the wharf—
You’d oughter heard me whoop.

“We went on board a little craft,
That looked just like a bug,
But mighty fast, and clean, and tight,
And elegant and snug.

“Away we went, toward the sea,
And nigh the Golden Gate
We met the mighty Tokio,
With her noble human freight.

“We run ’longside, they took us in,
There stood the famous man,
A double spy-glass to his eyes,
A see-gar in his hand.

“And just as cool, you’d never thought
That all this show and blare
Was anything at all to him—
Sich men are mighty rare.

“But that which pleased me far the best,
And wet my dim old eyes,
And made me think of them of oorn
That’s gone beyond the skies,

“Was when that boy of General Grant’s
Climbed up the big ship’s side,
And fell upon his mother’s neck,
And called her name, and cried.

“That lady, Mrs. General Grant,
Was ‘Mother dear’ to him—
The meeting, after three long years,
Made many eyes grow dim.

“Well, up the bay the gallant fleet
Sailed where the cannons roared,
And Alcatraz and Angel Isle
A blaze from guns outpoured.

“The war-ships belched their loud broadsides;
From many a brass band’s clang
‘Hail to the Chief,’ from everywhere,
In clashing music rang.

“When night had closed around the scene,
The city beamed with light,
And rockets glared and fires blazed
On Yerba Buena’s height.

“The Tokio, her voyage done,
Then resting in the bay,
Like some huge monster of the sea
Beside her anchors lay.

“And then the Mayor and his staff,
And Governor came down,
To give the General welcome home
And freedom of the town.

“The Oakland brought the General off,
And as he stepped ashore,
The surging crowd set up a shout
That swelled into a roar.

“The Mayor made a pretty speech,
And Grant in brief replied;
He said he felt immensely pleased
To reach this Western side,

“And talked about the good old times
When he was here before,
And thanked them for this welcome, grand,
Back to his native shore.

“They took him then, in royal state,
Up through the city’s glare,
Amid the people’s wild huzzas,
And trumpets’ brazen blare.

“The streets were packed, for miles and miles,
With crowds in wild delight,
And all along the swarming sway,
Was one bright blaze of light.

“The grand parade, with banners gay,
Was sure a pleasing sight,
But that which gave me pleasure most,
On that eventful night

“Was seeing soldiers from both sides,
In all the great ado,
Marching together in the ranks,
The gray beside the blue.

“It showed if there was e’er a man
To bridge the chasm wide,
’Twas him for whom these veteran foes
Were marching side by side.

“Well, all along the crowded way
The cry was ‘See! he’s here!’—
The welkin rang, as on he came,
With one continued cheer.

“The people craned their necks and climbed
To any spot or place
To catch a glimpse, however short,
Of that great hero’s face.

“At last he reached the end, that night,
Of one more glorious march,
And rode, a modest man, beneath
A huge triumphal arch.

“Then songs and choruses were sung,
And anthems of the free,
And many hundred freemen’s throats
Gave forth the nation’s glee.

“We’ve got him back upon our shores,
Once more, good wife of mine,
And he will keep, the nation thinks,
Like good old ruby wine.”

’TIS MORE THAN ALL.

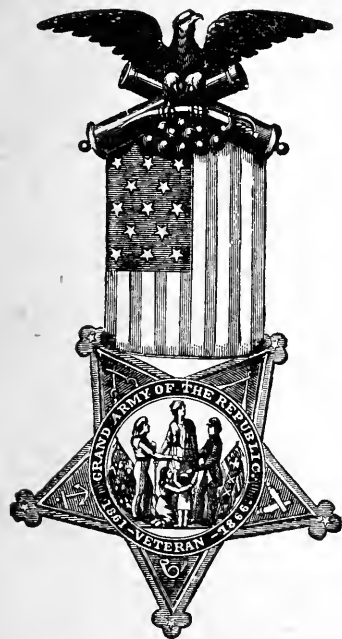
“No sail! no sail!” the drifting sailor moans;
“No gold! no gold!” the toiling miner groans;
“No fame! no name!” the weary poet sighs;
“No love! no love!” the heart in anguish cries.

With all we get, of life, or fame, or gold,
Existence here is dark, and sad and cold,
Without that light and blessing from above,
One sweet and trusting, earnest woman’s love.

SATISFACTION.

TO DR. JAMES SYMPSON, WINCHESTER, KY.

TWO brave old soldiers of the South,
Who carried many scars



They'd got while fighting
underneath

Their cherished stars and
bars,

Were talking of the sunny
South—

Their home—as all men
do,


The men who wore the
rebel gray,

And those who wore the
blue.

A vet'ran of the Federal line
Chanced then to pass that way,
And on his breast the brazen star,
A badge of honor, lay.
Quoth Johnnie Reb to Johnnie Reb,
"Did you observe that thar?
Now tell me what that emblem means—
That shiny golden star.

"I see 'em every now and then,
No matter whar I go,
And what they mean's a-puzzlin' me,
And what I want to know.
The men who w'ar 'em, when they meet,
Say, 'Comrade, howdy-do?'
And shake with honest, hearty grip,
In friendship, strong and true."

"Well, I can tell you what they mean,"
The other one replied;
"They mean those men were soldiers once,
And rallied side by side."



“Ef that’s the case,” the first one asked,

“Whar wuz they in the waugh?

What sorter fightin’ did they do,

An’ how’d they stand at taw?”

“They came right up, like gallant men,

And made it awful hot,

Where sabres gleamed and cannon roared

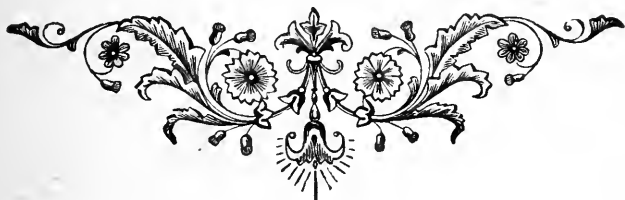
And belched their hurtling shot.

That was the sort of fight they made,

And never flinched a bit;

You’ll b’lieve me when I tell you, pard,

That we’re the ones they fit.”



WHEN WE FORGET.

TO COL. ED. WYNKOOP, SANTA FE, N. M.

WILL ever come the careless day,
When we, who stood in war's array,
Shall have no heart to dwell upon
The deeds of comrades, dead and gone,
Or e'en of those, who, living still,
Are marching down life's rugged hill,
To cross the stream that lies beside
The resting-place of them who died,
That our land may truly be
The home, forever, of the free?

Not while a hero wears a scar;
Not while the eagle and the star
Shall decorate the breasts of men
Who braved the battle's fury, when
They saw uplifted in the land
A strong and fratricidal hand

To tear the storied banner down,
That, born of heaven's starry crown,
Those self-same heroes freely gave
Their blood and best young years to save.

Not while in memory shall last
The thrillful story of the past,
And while the songs we used to sing
Shall tune the heart and round it fling
Remembrances of toilful days,
Of dangers dark or happy ways
That led us 'long a rugged life
'Twixt frequent fields of fearful strife,
Where mewing ball and screeching shell
Seemed part the orchestra of hell;

Where gallant rides of heroes down
To smoking plain or blazing town
Brought victory back to wavering ranks,
And smote with death the galling flanks,
And turned an enemy about
From triumph's flush to ruin's rout,
And changed the charging foeman's yell

To sorrowful disaster fell,
To plant the gleaming stripes and stars
Above the vaunted stars and bars.

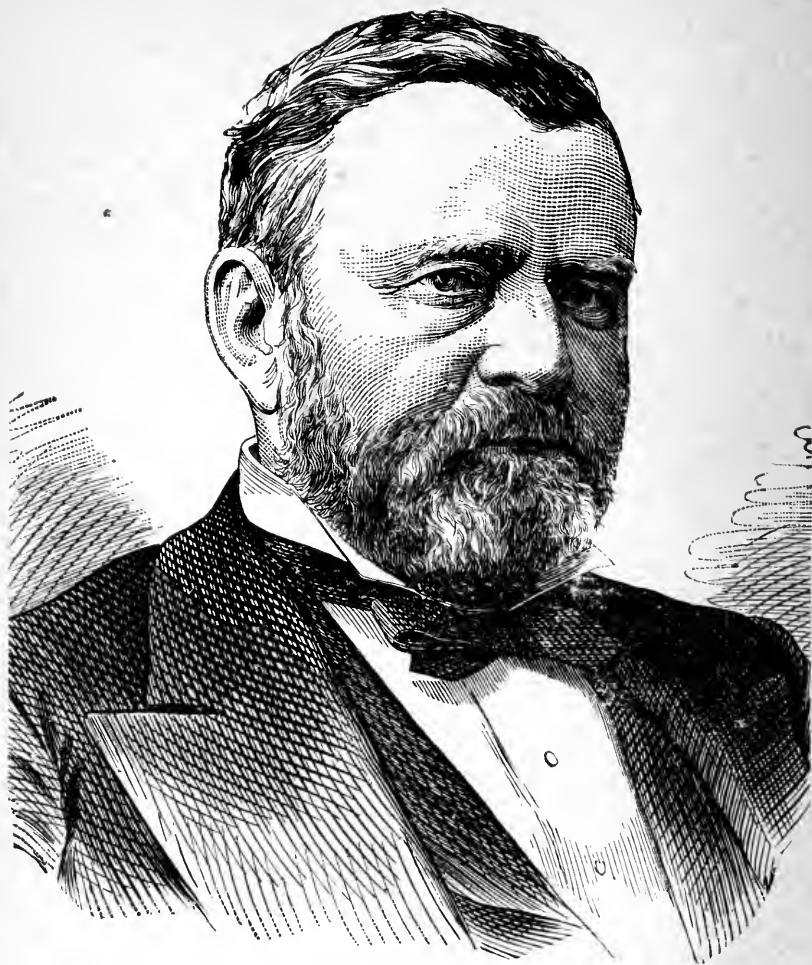
Not while to memory's unsealed
The murky march to Shiloh's field,
Or dark Antietam's crimson flow,
And Perrysville's ensanguined glow,
Where kinsmen met in mortal strife,
To brave each other, life to life,
Within the woods and pastures green,
Amid the leafy, summer's sheen,
Where boys together they had played
Beneath the spreading forest shade.

We'll cherish all until the day
That recollection fades away,
And leaves no impress of the fight,
On Lookout Mountain's cloudy height;
Of red Resaca's fierce contest,
And Chickamauga's devil-nest;
Of grim Atlanta's stern defense,
And Gettysburg's black violence,

And firm Fort Moultrie's miry fen,
And every rotten prison-pen.

Till from each country-loving breast,
All recollection's sunk to rest
Of friendships, welded in the blaze
Of war's red furnace, and the bays
Shall wither on each noble head
That now for country's sake lies dead;
Till every siege and march and camp,
With all their joys and griefs, lie damp
Within the mildewed, tottering walls,
Of memory's empty, ruined halls.

We'll not forget the comrades true,
Who wore with us the loyal blue,
But yet forgive, in heartsome way,
The erring ones who donned the gray.
We'll keep the soldier heart to feel
For all who faced a foeman's steel,
And while we garland every grave
Of fair Columbia's fallen brave,
Sweet charity will smile anew,
To see ill-will forgotten, too.



GEN. U. S. GRANT.

GRANT.

FROM humble walks and homely ways—
Away from glare and cant—
To highest fame and victor's bays,
Rose grand, heroic Grant.
In peace, a man of quiet mien,
In war, a leader brave,
All time will keep his memory green
And decorate his grave.

He fought the nation's battles well,
And saved his country's life,
And coming centuries will tell
His deeds amid the strife.
With sword and pen he wrote a page
Of history, so bright
His name is blazoned on the age
In lines of living light.

He led the legions of his land
Like Joshua of old,
And on the Shore Beyond they stand
In glory's line enrolled.
A monument will flout the sky
And proudly mark the ground
Where, honored here, his ashes lie,
A hero heaven-crowned.



MARCHING ON.

TO JOHN K. JEFFREY, OF CHEYENNE.

STEADILY on, the years have gone,
With stern and silent tread,
A score and more, since that dark day
When war's black cloud o'erspread
This land of love and liberty,
In happy Union wed.

Aye, many years have sped away
Since voice and bugle called
A million men to serried ranks—
True hearts and unappalled—
The nation's strength was rent in twain,
And stood opposing, walled.

Then Northern nerve and Southern soul
Were blent in battle's heat,
And 'gainst each other in the strife
Their flashing blades were beat,

And high the waves of carnage ran,
 Ensanguined in the meet.

That crimson page in history's book
 Hath long ago been turned,
And Peace, upon her altar-flame,
 Her incense offerings burned;
Remembrance freshens here to-day
 The woful lesson learned.

The ribbed and wrinkled face of earth,
 Where rifle-pits were lain,
And where the long contending lines
 Belched storms of leaden rain,
Shines brightly in the springtime's sun—
 Is smooth and fair again.

And now, throughout the blessed land
 That thousands died to save,
We strew, in love, these floral sweets
 Upon each grassy grave,
In memory of our comrades gone,
 The lost and fallen brave.

The mighty host that marshalled once,
Amid the rush and din
Of surging elements of war,
Engulfing kith and kin,
Is filling up these silent ranks,
And ours are growing thin.

The Grànd old Army's veteran line
Is marching to the tide,
Where some have crossed, and resting lie
In bivouac, side by side,
And all the column follows on
The grim, unhalting guide.

'Twill reassemble over there,
In glorious array,
And heaven's ever-shining sun
A living light shall lay,
In one white sheen, upon a line
That blends the blue and gray.

FILII VETERANORUM.

INSCRIBED TO GEO. G. MEADE CAMP, No. 3, SONS OF VETERANS,
CHEYENNE, WYOMING.

TAKE the flag, ye sons of sires—
They who kept the altar fires



Of the nation blazing
bright,
Through the wild tem-
pestuous night
Of the war's black deso-
lation,
And who gave the land
salvation.

Sons of Veterans, take
their banners,
And with long and loud
hosannas,
Praise the God who reigns
above,

Who hath given home and love;
Let your watchword ever be
"North and South, Fraternity."

Lo! now, in the northern lights,
Crimson hue with blue unites;
In their splendor quivering bars
Weave among the gleaming stars,
Till, with gems in every fold,
See the spangled flag unrolled.

O'er the land, and every sea,
Waves this ensign of the free;
Guided by its lambent light
This republic, in the right,
Leads you onward, stern arrayed,
Wielding Freedom's battle-blade.

MY COMRADE WITH A CROWN.

TO THE MEMORY OF COLEMAN ROGERS APPERSON.

MY dearest friend, when later years,
Have floated down life's troubled stream,
Laden with care, as age appears,
Remember then youth's golden dream,
When, with that glow of nerving ire,
That ever cheers the patriot on
To brave hard toil and dangers dire,
Thus to avenge his country's wrong,
We left our homes and kindred dear,
By deep prayers followed that our stay
Would bring naught but a thankful tear
That God had lightened all our way;
Remember, too, this barren rock,
Where nature holds her rugged sway,
Where chaos wild she seems to mock,
As when the world had known no day;

COMRADE WITH A CROWN. 115

How on our watch together here

We vowed to change the scene and page,
And in another play appear

Upon a better-lighted stage.

Ah, yes, when age has dimmed your sight,

Let memory greet me with a smile,

The boy who by you stood for right—

Your true friend in the rank and file.

HANGING ROCK, WILD CAT, KY., June 18, 1863.

But now, long since those humble lines were
writ,

By a flickering midnight lamp I sit,

Remembering, sadly, thou art in thy grave,

My gallant friend, so noble, true and brave.

For on Resaca's blood-red field of strife,

To country yielding there thy pure young life,

In glowing lines upon the scroll of fame

Was traced, forever bright, thy glorious name.

And high o'er all thy lofty soul hath soared
Away to Him by all pure hearts adored;
But, thanks to God, beyond the silent grave
Once more with thee we'll meet, our long-lost
brave!

LOUISVILLE, KY., February 3, 1868.



DIALECT POEMS.

INTERNATIONAL.

TO HON. GEORGE P. SMITH, OF DENVER.

PAT.



‘T WAS not me intintion
To make ony mintion
Of Erin, the gim that lies over the say;
But since ye are spakin’,
An’ boastin’ a-makin’,
Bedad I’ll be takin’
A hand in that busy-ness too, be the way.

It’s a nate little island
Of low land and high land,

Wad girls just as purty as iver they grow:

An' by that same token—

An' sure I'm not jokin',

The land is just soakin'

Wad phwisky as foine as they make it, ye know.

And a man takes it aisy

Just simply bekase he

Has nothing much else to be doin', ye see.

The land's so oppressed

Wad the lord and his guest,

Sure to Paddy it's best

To lave his dear home for wan that is free.

But where'er he wanders

The Irishman ponders

Upon the swate island, the land of his birth:

And sighs for her mountains,

Her lakes and her fountains,

The woods and the green lanes

Of Erin, mavourneen, the bright spot of earth.



HANS.

Shust stop von leedle, meisther Pat,
Und liden—dot is so.
Dot blaces you call Ireland
Is pooty fine, I know,
But don't id vos too schmall, mein Gott!
To raise dot kebbige roses
Dot grows so big by Prussia oud—
So helup me gracious, Moses!

Down of dot Rhine, dot glides him py
Der Deitchen Engleheim,
Mine fadder maks a wine so goot
Id's jolly all der time.

Und efery vere de peer vas rich
Und blendy—dot is true—
Und I vos fond von peer and wine—
So helup me—so vos you?

Yaw, Sharmany is pooty nice,
Und I vood stay me dere,
But den my brudder comes away,
So I comes over hare.

Katrina like dis goondry too—
She say her healt's so goot,
Und ve got twendy ghels to shoe,
Und fifteen poys to boot.

JACQUES.

Ah, zeas is vera fine, zeas talk—
But go to La Belle France
Wiz me, for zhust one littal walk—
Ze home of wine and dance.

Ze vin tree grow, ze frog he hop,
So mooch, so quick in France,
Ze man cán go and nevair stop—
Ze poor man have one chance.

And Paree—ah, zat city grand—
Be gar! zat ope your eye;
No city in zees new-found land
Can wiz zat city vie.



And in zat Jardin de Mabille,
Ze leddy kick so high,
You vera mooch afraid she will
One hole kick in ze sky.

Zees country you haf speak about,
So vera rich and fine,
Ees not one-half compare him out
Wiz zat grand France of mine.

POMP.

Jesso! jesso! you's a-talkin' mighty loose,
You white folks is, but it aint no use,
De lan' of de blessed an' de lan' of de free
Is right hyar among us, YOU HEAR ME?



You's a-braggin' mighty tall 'bout whar you
 useter be,
An' things just a-whoopin' in de lan's across de
 sea,
But you rolls over hyar, mighty thick and
 mighty fas',
An' it looks like yo' comin' was a-gwine fur
 ter las'.

Ef everything was better in de "gim of de say,"
An' nuthin' half as good as it is in "Sharmany,"

An' France was a beater fur dis—two to one,
Wharfo' don't you stay dar?—listen to me, hon'!

I don't b'lieve a word—nar' word of it all—

You done heerd dis nigger git up an' squall—

But I tell you what's de trufe—an' I tell you
mighty plain—

Hit's jes' as I was sayin' to Hanner Mariar
Jane:

Ef you'd jes' stop a-drinkin', an' git down to
work,

An' lay aside you' blunderbust an' sling-shot
an' dirk,

An' try an' do you' duty, like you swo' you
would to us,

Hard times would take a skeer, an' git up an'
dus'.

He's a low man, in my mind, dat's layin' roun'
to talk.

Ef yo' gwine to be a citizen you's got ter walk
de chalk.

Dese am de facts, an' every word is true,

An' dats what make de niggah say what he do.

SORRY FOR THE LORD.

TO JOHN FRIEND, OF RAWLINS, WYOMING.

I 'M gittin' sorry fur you, Lawd,
Indeed an' trufe, I am;
De niggah wants so monst'ous much,
Cep' Gilead an' de ba'm.
Dey prays fur ev'rything dey needs,
Dat work would bring 'em all,
An' wants de fruit of all de 'arth,
Jis' like befo' de fall.

I heard one niggah prayin', Lawd,
His very level bes',
Fur Christmas time de whole year roun'
An' all de time a res';
He axed to have de chicken roos'
Down on de lowes' limb,
An' turkeys jes' on top de fence,
In easy reach er him.

Come stately steppin', oh, good Lawd,
'Pon yo' lily-white steed,
An' smash dem sassy niggahs down,
An' bruise de sarpint's seed.
Dey howls at you de livelong night
An' robs you of yo' sleep,
'Kase dey's too lazy fur to sow,
An' got no crap to reap.

JULEY ANN.

TO JOHN CHEELEY OF COLORADO.

DEY say Ise cross an' cranky too,
An' mebbe dat I am.

Ise had enough to worry thoo
To aggervate a lamb.

Ise had nine chillun in my day,
An' nary one is lef';

Dey all was tuck an' kyard away,
An' I'm here by myse'f.

Ole master died when I wuz grown,
An' stated in his will,
Dat I mus' be Miss Susie's own—
Me an' de water-mill.

My chillun, dey wuz lotted out—
An', mind you, 'fo' dey's bawn,
Fur' I was healthy, young an' stout,
An' sho' as las' year's cawn.

De fus' wuz Tom, dey tuck him when
He jis' wuz fo' year old.

An' foll'rin' him wuz little Ben,
An' den my Jane wuz sold,

An' Lu an' Bob an' Tip an' Jim—
An' Sam, my crippled son,
Dey even mosied off wid him,
An' lef' me nary one.

Dem chillun's scattered ever'whar,
An' dunno who dey is,
But dey will know me ovah dar
When jedgment's sun is riz'.

I may 'pear monst'ous cross an' ill,
But Heaven knows I b'ar
No spite, er hate, er 'vengeful will
To block my way up dar.

AUNT CHLOE'S CREED.

TO GEORGE W. OHLENDORF OF OMAHA.

I SE hearn a monst'ous heap er talk
'Bout th'ology an' creeds,
But you hear ME a-shoutin' now,
Dar's nuthin' like good deeds.
Jes' gimme sweet religion, please—
I don't keer what's its name—
De Methodis' or Babtis' kind
Will save you, jes' the same.

I'm on my road to Heaven sho',
An' aint got time to talk;
Ef you is gwine 'long wid me
'You's got to walk de chalk;
Ole Petah's standin' at de gate,

An' hit am wide ajar,
But jes' a lettah f'um de church
Won't take you in thoo dar.

He gwineter ax you, mighty close,
All 'bout yo' daily walk,
An' ef you holp de neighbor po'
Wid somepen else but talk;
He gwineter sarch you thoo an' thoo,
An' sho' as you is bawn,
Ef you aint right, you'll wish dat Gabe
Had nevah blowed his hawn.

You'll see ole Mary shinin' dar,
An' Paul an' Silas, too,
An' Moses an' de other ones,
De ship er Zion's crew;
An' nary one will have a creed,
Ascep' de chas'enin' rod,
An' all will sing a "hallalu'"
Aroun' de throne er God.

SOME SINGIN'.

TO HALSEY M. RHOADS, OF DENVER.

DEY talked so mighty monst'ous much
About de white folks' singin'
Up in de big high-steeple chu'ch
Hit sot my years a-ringin'.
So up I goes an' tuck a seat
Jis' whar de sexton p'inted,
As 'umble dar, at Jesus' feet,
As any onann'inted.

De ban' struck up, and I declar'
Hit nearly froze my livah,
An' almos' raised my kinky ha'r
An' made my marrer shivah.
An' when de singin' started in,
Away up in de gal'ry,
Hit sounded like a cotton-gin
A-screekin' fur a sal'ry.

Dar warn't no soun' like "hallalu!"
An' "Jerdan's stormy rivah,"

JUBE'S OLD YALLER DOG. 131

“Char-i-o’ swingin’ low fur you,”
As evah I could ’skivah.
Hit warn’t de good ole shoutin’ songs
We has at cullud preachin’,
Whar glory an’ de love-feas’ b’longs,
Soul-sarchin’ an’ heart-reachin’.

JUBE'S OLD YALLER DOG.

TO CAPTAIN M. H. LAMB.

I SE be’n a-trav’lin’ thoo dis vale
Nigh on to eighty years,
An’ now my eyes is ’gun to fail
Wid weepin’ bittah tears.
My po’ ole wife is gonied above—
De way Ise gwine to jog—
An’ all dat’s left fur me to love
Is dat ole yaller dog.

My chillun’s scattered here an’ thar,
An’ wouldn’t know me now,
But we will pass de gates ajar,



OLD JUBE.

JUBE'S OLD YALLER DOG. 133

At jedgment day, I 'low,
An' while I make de 'stressful rounds
Thoo all de damp an' fog,
Of dese yar wearisome low-grounds,
Ise got dat yaller dog.

We's hunted, many a livelong night,
De 'poßsum an' de coon,
An' cotch 'em by de silvah light
Of many a southern moon.
We's built a blaze an' cooked de meat
'Longside a big back-log,
An' had some times mos' monst'ous sweet—
Jis' me an' dat ole dog.

An' long as I is stayin' here
Ise got one frien', I know;
Ef I is po' de dog don't keer—
His head don't run on show.
An' long as I is got a bite
Er hominy an' hog,
Ise gwine to 'vide—you jis' is right—
Wid dat ole yaller dog.

THE TENDERFOOT.

TO WM. H. ROOT, OF LARAMIE.

A very fresh and forward youth
Came gliding from the east,
And he was bent to ride, forsooth,
A wild-eyed broncho beast,
And be a bad man on the plains—
A howling cowboy king—
And rule the roost and hold the reins,
And make the welkin ring.

He landed here, in fair Cheyenne,
Full rigged from top to toe,
The picture of a deadly man
Prepared to meet a foe.
With "chaps" and belt, broad hat and gun,
He seemed, in very truth,
A Turco fierce, a fiery Hun,
This callow, eastern youth.

He splashed his name upon the book
Where guests are listed down,

Then strutted out, with naughty look
To carminate the town.
The pioneer, who landed here
In quite an early day,
Stood back aghast and white with fear,
Before this dread "hooray."

The hotel had a boot-black lad,
A wild, yet shining light,
Who, moved by him who rules the bad,
Laid for that eastern wight,
And aided by a graceless crew
Of jubilating sparks,
That tenderfoot was trotted through
A lively set of larks.

In dress much like the buckskin scout
Who terrifies "the States",
That boot-black bad went sailing out,
Conspiring with his mates.
They found the tenderfoot, and led
The unsuspecting guy

Through doctored drinks, of liquor red,
And many a fearful lie.

They fed him stories strong and tough
Of terrible stampedes;
How men are ground to sausage stuff
While doing gallant deeds.
And thus beguiled, some led him down
Where Minnehaha flows,
And others gathered through the town
A gang of wild bronchos.

When he had reached the water's side,
There came a dreadful roar;
"Stampede! stampede!" those hoodlums cried,
And scattered long the shore;
"Dive in, and save yourself!" they yell.
The tenderfoot "dove" in,
And down the horsemen came pell-mell,
With whoop and rattling din.

That tenderfoot was nearly drowned,
In water, muck and mud;

They dragged him out and gathered 'round
The damp, young eastern blood;
They rolled him on the sandy bank
To pump the mortar out,
Then took the frail and tender crank
The bee-line homeward route.

He lay in bed, a week or two,
Hard struggling for his breath,
But youth and beauty pulled him through
And "coppered" hungry death.
Then straightway homeward to the east
That "bad man" took a train;
He did not ride a broncho beast,
And won't come back again.

But 'mong the men, and maidens fair,
In his dear native town,
He tells of dangers he would dare,
And wins a great renown.
Now such as these are 'mong the best
Of holy terrors, who
Are giving our glorious west
Its gaudy, wicked hue.

RED CHECKS.

TO COL. BASCOM, OF KANSAS.

I'VE had the blamedest streak of luck
That any fellow ever struck
For six months now, or more.
My togs are bad and gittin' wuss,
My hat aint worth a copper cuss.
Great heavens! what a bore!

To show how things will all go wrong
When on that road they start along,
Just listen to this tale.
I'd tramped a-many a weary mile,
Without a single bite, or smile—
Was hungry, worn and pale.

'Twas gittin' awful cold and black
As I come hoofin' down the track
Into a country town.
I didn't know a soul anigh
Unto whose hash-pile I could fly
For miles and miles around.

I walked into that country town,
And in a faro bank sat down,
And took a little horn,
And, tell ye what's the honest truth,
The checks they used, my gentle youth,
Were grains of Injun corn.

I watched that little game awhile,
Then to myself said with a smile,
"Now here's a chance for me."
I knowed that just a few miles back
There stood a corn-crib by the track,
As full as it could be.

I sauntered out of that 'ere place,
And turned my hopeful, eager face
Toward that brimmin' bin;
And soon I reached the happy spot,
And felt among the lucky lot,
And took a big ear in.

I shelled it as I went along,
And sung the only happy song
I'd sung for ninety days.

I stuck my stake into my clothes
And in that bank I stuck my nose,
For I had made a raise.

I watched the game a turn or two,
And tried to look as green as you,
And thought I'd played it fine—
Then walked up like a country jake
And took a handful of my stake
And laid it on the nine.

The dealer looked up with a sigh,
Which made me think a winnin's nigh,
And said in tones so bland,
"My worthy friend, it mayn't look right,
But no red chips are played to-night"
And that's the way it panned.

Now thar's my luck, and any beast
Who says it's good, he lies at least—
I'd tell him so right here—
For in that bin, chuck full of grain,
No man could ever go, again,
And find a colored ear.



The Little Shoe

TO EUGENE FIELD, Esq.

THAR aint much poetry, that's a fact,
In a pa'r of worn out shoes,
But I've seen truck agoin', that lacked
As much of soul, or the muse.

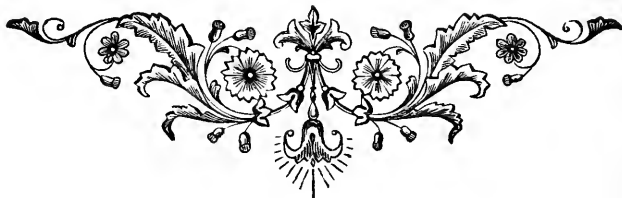
I've got a shoe, 'bout's big's my thumb,
All gone at the heel and toe,
That makes my poor old heartstrings thrum
To the tune of long ago.

It's the shoe of a little baby boy,
Who was two or three worlds to me.
He come and went, and took all the joy
That ever I reckon to see.

The mother that bore him went along,
And it broke my heart in two;
Sometimes I hear her lullaby song
When I'm holding that tiny shoe.

And I hear the patter of wee, small feet,
That fitted it when it was new,
But all that's left is the memory sweet,
And the little worn out shoe.

Thar aint no poetry, much, in this,
But I think I've got the clue
To a road that leads to a mite of bliss,
If I follow this baby shoe.



MINOR POEMS.



NO WORDS CAN TELL.

SWEET Geraldine, my bonnie queen,
Thou'dst have me tell in song
With poet's art, from open heart,
My love so deep and strong.

No troubadour, in days of yore,
E'er sang in accents free
A song so sweet, at Love's fair feet,
As I would sing to thee.

But love like mine, at such a shrine,
No words can ever tell,
Or chorded string in music sing
The hopes that in me dwell.

'Twould only cost Love's labor lost
And be a struggling moan,
Like limners feel who seek to steal
With brush a dying moan.

If thy bronze hair and face so fair
Were pillowed on my breast,
I'd whisper low "I love thee so,"
Nor hope to tell the rest.

THE NATIONAL ROTUNDA.

TO COL. JOHN A. JOYCE, GEORGETOWN, D. C.

YON looming dome, that flouts the azure
skies,

Like snowy peaks that 'mong the mountains
rise,

In rare proportions lifted, chaste and strong,
To where the fleecy clouds oft float along,
And where full many a fierce and sweeping
gale

Hath raked its sides of overlying mail,
Points to the only throne that freemen know,
And symbols all that patriots ask, below.

In bas-relief, upon an eastern door,
Rogers hath wrought from deep historic lore

In breathing bronze, and snatches back again
The scenes, the days, the stories and the men
That marked the pregnant time when eager
fame

Was gravings Isabella's queenly name
Beside "Columbus" on the sacred scroll
That freemen now, with trembling joy, unroll.

Within the hall the gentlest footstep makes
The echoes ring, and to the fancy wakes
The tread of men, like Webster, Cass and Clay,
Who honored well the nation's yesterday.
These circled walls are deep and richly
wrought,

In carvings quaint, between the archings
caught,

And shadows of the country's struggling past,
In paintings grand, against the walls are cast.

Here clings the hour when first a sailor brave
Had crossed Atlantic's wild, tempestuous wave,
And in the perfume-laden winds unfurled
Granada's banner in a new-found world.

The awe-struck natives flit among the trees,
Watching the ship's sails filling in the breeze—
The huge white birds, that strangely fluttered
 down,
From Great Manitou's happy hunting ground.

De Soto first beholds the murky tide
Of Mississippi's waters, grandly wide,
Beneath whose darksome, cold, and angry wave
The gallant Spaniard found an unmarked
 grave.

He heedeth not the lithe and naked form
Of Indian maid in beauty, fresh and warm;
But thrilled with wild ambition's dazzling
 dream,
Greets, with a welcome glad, the noble stream.

High over all, within the lofty dome—
The helmet huge that crowneth Freedom's
 home—
The virgin States, in allegory grand,
Are pictured by the limner's cunning hand.

Here Pater Patriæ, laurel-crowned and calm,
And winged Triumph, bearing Victory's palm,
With Liberty behold the noontide sun
Shine bright upon "a multitude in one."

And there, by noble Freedom's gleaming blade,
Priestcraft and Kingly Power low are laid,
And from her blows the broken hordes of War
Flee sullenly, and Peace smiles from afar.

Then Ceres comes, with plenty in her hand,
The queen of ripening harvests in the land,
And Flora gleans the freshest flowers there
To deck her monarch's long and sunny hair.

Beside his giant forge old Vulcan stands,
His mighty sledge within his brawny hands,
And molten sparks from 'neath the hammers
start,

Where sturdy smiths, about him, ply their art.

From out the glowing east young Mercury flies
To where Columbia's commerce drooping lies,
And now prosperity has brightly dawned
With but a wave of his caducean wand.

In graceful beauty, ravishing and nude,
Beaming with love, like maiden hap'ly wooed,
Sweet Aphrodite, born of crisp sea foam,
Floats up from out her mystic, coral home.

She grasps within her dainty, dimpled hand,
The line which links us to the mother-land,
And Neptune rises, wonder-struck and grim,
And trident-armed, from Ocean's rugged brim.

Then wise Minerva, teacher of the laws,
Of science and the arts, the curtain draws,
And marches forth with regal, stately tread,
Just as she sprang from Jove's imperial head.

* * * * *

And thus the striking tableaux end,
Where science, art and learning blend
Their beauties with the graceful might
That guides this nation in the right.





“GYPSY.”

TO MY SISTER NANNIE.

O H, yes! I'm gray, and bald, and old—
Not even blest with a little gold—
But that sweet girl, she loves me well,
And why, you never could, ever tell.

Ah, she is bright, and good, and fair,
And sunlight lives in her eyes and hair:
Yet both are black as noon of night—
Her lips would tempt an anchorite.

And I love her, with all my soul—
No pitiful love, like a miser's dole—
My heart goes out to her as free
As a home-bound ship on a homeward sea.

And mine is a heart that's good and strong;
Old as it is it carries no wrong;
It has no crime nor sorrow to bear;
'Tis clear as the pure, intrenchant air.

Living are those who'll laugh at this;
But what care I for a serpent's hiss?
When snakes crawl near enough to feel,
I quietly grind them under my heel.

But let me now the riddle unfold,
Why she loves me, so gray and old,
And she so young, and bright, and fair,
With sunlight in her eyes and hair.

I came, a veteran soldier, back
From war and desolation's track,
And, with my sword, I brought along
My minstrel harp, and soul and song.

She hung my sword in the old roof-tree,
And came and sat upon my knee;
"You are a poet," she said, "I know,
And that is why I love you so."

I am a man, and she a child,
And with my story she's beguiled,
For I'm a doting old brother, you see,
And she's a sister sweet to me.

BABY'S MORNING.

WHEN morning comes and sunlight
streams

In tender, soft and golden gleams,
And through the curtains dancing beams

Steal coyly in the room,
My baby wakes in grave surprise,
And turns her great and wondering eyes
Toward the shimmering matin dyes

That tint the lily bloom.

'Tis double morn to thee, sweet one—
The morn of day and a life begun—
God grant thy day and life-time's sun
 May ever sweetly shine;
That happiness without alloy,
That cannot fail or ever cloy,
And brightest rays of purest joy,
 May bless each hour of thine.



COMING.

—————
To MY WIFE.
—————

O VER the bay on the steamer,
 At noon of a beautiful day,
'Mid sights for a poet dreamer
 To dream of by the way,

Out on the long pier, reaching
 Far in the blue of the water,
Out where the gulls are screeching,
 Cometh my wife and daughter.

Away from the land of flowers,
 Away from the Golden Gate,
Where a grand young city towers,
 They come, my darling and mate.

Over the rock-ribbed mountains,
 White with the winter's snow,
Along by the frozen fountains
 That in the moonlight glow,

Over the hills and pampas,
 Where frost at morning gleams,
Where the wild deer frightened scampers,
 Along by the babbling streams,

They come to my arms, long waiting;
 Coming o'er hill and lea,
On wings of love to the mating,
 Coming, thank God, to me.

Whiz! oh wheels of the engine;
 Dive through tunnel and gorge,
Swift as the fishing penguin—
 And sing as ahead you forge.



MOUNT OF THE HOLY CROSS.

TO STANLEY WOOD.

WHERE Nature's God hath roughest
wrought,

Where spring the purest fountains;
Where, long ago, the Titans fought,
And hurled for missiles, mountains:
Where everlasting snows abide,
And tempest clouds are driven
Along the solid granite side
Of yawning chasms, riven
Deep in the Rockies' grandest pride,
That lifts its head to Heaven:

Amid the wilds, where awful rise
The giant peaks, that fathom
Night's starry depths and day's blue skies,
And brood above the chasm,
One monarch 'mongst the mighty hills
Rears high his summit hoary,

Like some grim king, whose legend fills
A page of olden story,
And heart o'er-awes and soul enthrills,
Before his regal glory.

The Holy Cross of Christian faith,
Above the royal velvet,
In beauty shines, an emblem wraith,
High on his beetling helmet;
Its white arms stretching through the sheen
Of silvery mist, are gleaming;
A talisman, the world to screen,
Hope's symbol, in its seeming;
A wonder grand, a joy serene,
Upon the ages beaming.

THREE LIGHTS.

FULL forty years have trudged along
The dusty road of life,
That I have followed with a song,
And by it found a wife.

And blessed little ones have come
To sit upon my knee,
And glad my heart with joyous hum
Of playfulness and glee.

Through every clime, 'neath many suns,
I've chased the fickle dame
Of Fortune, who so swiftly runs
Ahead of wealth and fame.

I've tugged upon the battle-field,
And felt that sternest joy
That comes to see the foeman yield
To warrior—but a boy.

I've stood before my fellowmen,
And won their strong applause,
And felt repaid in glory when
I've won a righteous cause.

I've clambered up the rugged steep
And found the blooming plain;
I've wept with those who needs must weep,
And laughed with them again.

Full forty years I've trudged along
The dusty road of life,
But always sang a happy song
To ease the endless strife.

For in it all two things I've found—
Yea, three, to cheer the way—
A wife, a babe, a conscience sound,
Will light the darkest day.





“WATCH NIGHT.”

TO C. F. R. HAYWARD, DENVER.

’TIS time the Old Year’s knell
was rung;
’Tis time the New Year’s birth
was sung;
The dirge and song, together sing—
“The King is dead. Long live the
King.”

While sitting, pondering, to-night,
Before my lamp’s dull, flickering light,
With drooping eyes and failing pen
I wrote the aimless lines, and then,
Fell fast asleep, and had a dream,
And to my fancy this did seem:

I.

Within an antique grate a ruddy blaze
Lit such a scene as memory might raise
Of olden time; those grand baronial days
That stories chronicle, and poets praise.

II.

Partaking of the fire's warmth and glare,
An aged man sat, idly musing there—
Mused of the once Hyperion locks, which, lo!
Were whiter now than winter's drifted snow.

III.

Mused on the lines which time doth deftly trace
Upon the whilom youthful heart and face.
"Life" was the musing old man's well-known
name—
He whom so many love—so few can blame.

IV.

The night without is cold, and dark, and drear;
Faint are the throbbings of the dying year;
Within the room a heavy silence dwells;
A ticking clock the ending moments tells.

V.

A rush of passing wind, a wintry roar,
Turns quick the old man's eyes toward the
door;

There, on the threshold, stands a phantom tall—
A form whose mantle is a funeral pall.

VI.

His blanched locks upon his shoulders stray,
And sadsome smiles upon his features play;
“Be not dismayed,” he said, “but calmly hear;
I am the vision of the dying year.

VII.

“Behold this form that 'neath its burden bows;
A load of lost and sadly broken vows;
I bear thy days and moments, unimproved,
And on my face thy deeds have wrinkles
grooved.

VIII.

“Thy golden chances, grossly thou'st abused;
The evil chosen and the good refused;

God's gifts exchanged for trifles light as air,
And yet thy head wears age's whitened hair.

IX.

"Awake! thy dormant energies arouse,
And in this sacred time renew thy vows;
E'en now, the few remaining moments grasp—
The hands on yonder dial almost clasp."

X.

Then casting on the dial a mingled gaze
Of love and sadness, vanished. In amaze
I woke, and heard the belfry's clanging din
Ringing the Old Year out, the New Year in.

ALERE FLAMMAM.

TO DOUGLASS AND INA RHODES.

GAILEY and merrily twang the strings
Of poet's harp to-night,
As he sits by his hearth and lightly sings
Good wishes, true and bright.

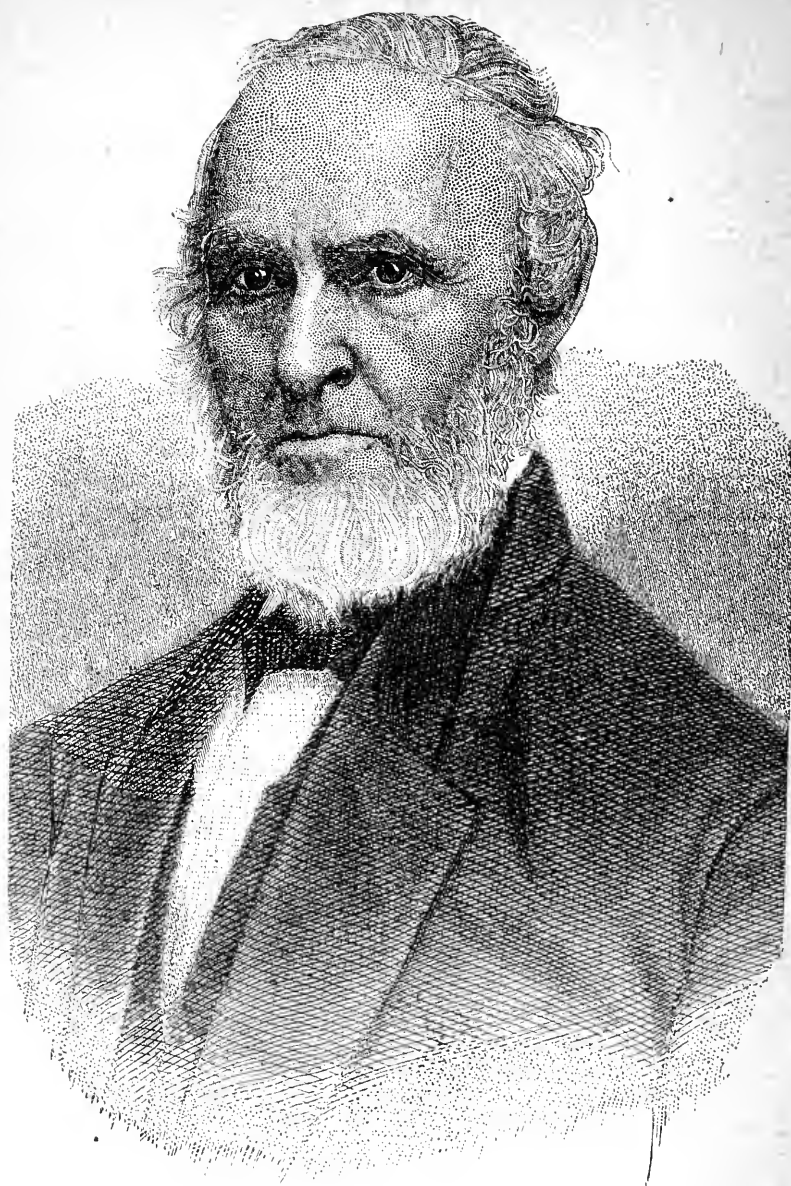
Wishes for you, who have just begun
To live in the high estate
That warm, true love has faithfully won,
And led you two to mate.

He wishes your home may an Eden be
With naught to ever beguile;
An Eden with no forbidden tree,
Nor serpent there to defile.

Or a well-trimmed bark on a favoring sea,
And blessed with Fortune's smile,
That shall sail to the port of Eternity,
Unheeding the siren's wile.

He wishes that you may live till you see
A life both happy and long,
And children's children at your knee—
And this is the poet's song.





THE QUAKER POET.

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

THE poet's shell is oft attuned
To sing a nation's songs,
And honor to that minstrel's name
By well-earned right belongs.

Yea, any soul whose chords are touched
By poesy's deft hand,
Adds one more strain of harmony
To heaven's choral band.

And by a strong and glorious pen
It hath been sweetly writ,
That others take the dross of earth—
With God the singers sit.

Now unto thee, great Whittier,
I sing this simple lay;
Thou, who hast sung, with poet's power,
The chains of slaves away.

Before thy numbers, wise and strong,
A people's shackles burst,
And on their scroll of noblest friends,
Thy name is written first.

Full many a poor and suffering soul
Hath thanked thee for the word
That turned an angel toward the door
Where need had wept unheard.

I cannot chord my tiny harp
In unison with thee,
Nor sing the blessings thou hast wrought,
On land and on the sea.

The sweetest singers of them all,
And blended into one,
Could never tell, in words of ours,
The good that thou hast done.

But fain would I this tribute bring,
And lay it at thy feet;
In worth 'tis but the widow's mite—
I wish it were as meet.

THE SÆNGERFEST.

TO PHILIP ZEHNER, SR., OF CHEYENNE.



MUSIC sweet, music wild,
Music everywhere;
Music grand and glorious,
Sounding in the air.

Whence come all these charming
strains,

Whence these happy, rich refrains?

'Tis the singers of the east,
Come to make a music feast,
And the singers of the west
At the German Sængerfest.

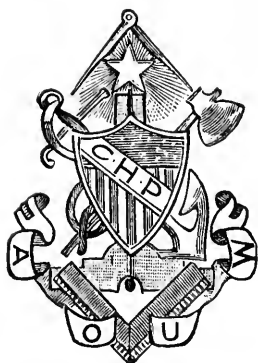
Land of Gœthe; land of Schiller;
Land of glorious song,
Where Beethoven and the Mozart
Famously belong,

Sends these singers o'er the sea
With their roundelays of glee;

From "der faderland" they come,
 Making this their welcome home,
 And the echoes of the west
 Reverberate the Sængerfest.

THE WORKMEN'S WAY.

TO T. J. MEEK, ST. LOUIS, MO.



LIFE'S journey leads us
 many ways,
 O'er valley, hill and plain,
 By babbling brook, through
 quaggy bog,
 And fields of golden grain,
 And here and there a path
 leads off—

A tempting, shining way—
 And many thoughtless brothers turn,
 To find themselves astray.

The lowering clouds oft gather 'round
 The 'luring path so light,

And darkness spreads her murky pall

In one unending night.

Then lost in night, and in the world

By far more sadly lost

Are they than those wrecked far at sea,

On angry billows tossed.

But blest are they who journey on,

With hand in brother's hand;

Receiving strength and giving aid—

A strong and loving band.

The weary track is easier then,

The rough road smoother grows;

And thorns are cleared from off the way,

And by it blooms the rose.

Dear CHARITY, the guiding star

Of all our walks below,

Shall light us ever in the right,

To where God's waters flow.

And HOPE, the beaming angel one,

Will shed her spirit through

And warm each heart with fervent faith,

And blessings 'mong us strew.

'Tis thus our Ancient Order aims
To honor him who delves
With spirit true and faithful heart,
And helps us help ourselves.
And sweet assurance, too, it gives,
That when we've gone before,
We'll leave, with loved ones left behind,
PROTECTION at the door.

A MEMORY AND A TEAR.

'TIS noon of night, and from a long, lone
walk,
I've come to sit me down and meditate;
To croon and ponder, musing with myself;
To mumble, in an old man's piping way.

That walk had been a hard and weary one,
Had I been 'companied by other thoughts
Than those which held me as I strolled adown
The wintry street—the hushed and quiet street,
Save for the restless wind, that blowing light,

Listless and wanton, thro' the bare-armed trees,
Made music fitting to my reverie,
So deep, and reaching to the past,
That being once again a boy, my limbs
Forgot the years they've marched along beside
Since lusty youth, in roseate glow, was mine.

In all the years, since then, I've seen the world
On many sides, and felt its jagged points,
As rolling in swift motion, on its poles,
It grinds the face of those who do not wear
Protecting Fortune's mask, impierceable.

I've sat within the shade of orange groves,
And heard, in low and sweet and witching
 strains,

Some far-off music, as of siren songs,
Weird-like, from wooded shores of placid lakes,
Soft o'er the listening waters steal along.

I've borne the cold of arctic heights, and
 dragged,
Half famished, o'er the sands of desert plains,

And striv'n in solitude, amid the wilds
And gloom of awful desolation lost.

I've stood upon a lonely isle, far out
Amid the sea, and yearning, hopeful, watched
The waste to catch a sight of saving sail,
And day by day saw, but with growing dread,
The crawling canyons of the deep upheave.

But in it all I've had a holy, sweet,
And blessed memory to abide with me—
My strong young manhood's first and cherished
love.

And here's a great and faithful tear; one lone,
True, tender friend, of bright and bygone years
That, some decades ago, held in their arms
The long-lost love that I beheld to-night,
So far away, and yet so vividly,
Adown life's wonder-sided vista dim.

Welcome thou art, my fellow mourner, here
Beside the grave of buried hopes; welcome,
Thou sweet and pure good comforter of mine;

And mayst thou come again, sometime, to me,
For with thee comes a gentle, tender touch
Of pity for myself, that softeneth,
As with an angel's kind and soothing ways,
A heart that hath no other pain so sweet;
A heart that crying, bleeding with it all,
Hugs the strong anguish, for the blessed joy
It gave, when that young love was all the world,
And Heaven, so pure it was, and blissful.



THE IMMERSION.

TO REV. D. L. RADER.

THE Sabbath evening's sunshine streams
In tender, soft and golden gleams,
Through early spring-time's half clad trees,
That shiver in the chilling breeze.

Down where the Kaw glides gracefully along,
Beside the stream a joyous little throng
Is gathered on the wave-washed, pebbly shore,
The Jordan Gate to God's Forevermore.

Clad in a loose and flowing gown,
An aged minister goes down,
With cautious step, and staff in hand,
From where his congregation stand,

And sounds the rushing waters till they gird
His waist, and lave his long and snowy beard;
He then returning lifts his streaming eyes,
In holy prayer, toward the upper skies.

Now as he leads a convert in—
Toward his God—away from sin,
A song of joy the silence breaks,
And echo from the hills awakes.

The song is hushed and Christian hearts rejoice,
As o'er the stream the old man's feeble voice
Is heard, in distant, deep, and solemn tone,
Sweet as the wind harp's melancholy moan.

And in the name of God, and Son,
And Holy Spirit—Three in One—
The sinner sinks beneath the wave,
And grasps the pearl the Saviour gave.

And now the joyous band upon the shore
Sing louder, louder, sweeter than before,
And 'cross the stream another happy throng
Catch up the swelling chorus of the song.

And faintly o'er the waters wide
Like vesper hymn, the echoes ride,
Till up they roll, through heaven's open door,
And swell the music there forevermore.

BETWEEN THE OAK AND ELM.

TO GEORGE GASTON, ESQ., OF KANSAS CITY.

OUT on the skirts of a brave young town,
My friend has built his quiet home—
Out of the reach of the surf and foam
Of the surging sea of life around.

On a lofty hill, rough, grand and steep,
Whose beetling face looks sternly down,
As in an ever-dark'ning frown,
To where Missouri's waters sleep.

Below a sister city lies,
From out whose strong and throbbing heart
The blood of commerce fresh doth start,
And through its iron arteries flies.

And far beyond the opposing hills,
Across the river's sleeping tide,
Where gallant steamers nobly ride,
The bloom-decked plain the picture fills.

A happy man—if such there lives—
Must be my noble, hearty friend.
No little grief his soul should bend,
For he has all that Fortune gives.

An oak—a monarch of the wood—
An elm-tree grand, of haughty mien,
His little cottage stands between,
As safe as ever castle stood.

His wife, a young and girlish joy,
Makes full each day his cup of bliss,
With many a sweet caress and kiss,
And laugh, and jest so gay and coy.

And that their lives be thus, along
The oft-time rugged path of life,
Full free from every care and strife,
Shall be the prayer that ends my song.



Twenty Years Ago.

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

TO LEONORA BARNES.

I sat to-night, by a pale, sad light,
Dejected, lone and wan,
Till memory brought a happy thought
Of twenty years ago;
A thought most sweet that came to greet
That time of roseate glow,
'Mid shining rays of halcyon days,
Now twenty years ago.

It lit the gloom, and filled the room
With mem'ries bright and gay,
And banished pain, and once again
Drove sullen Care away.
I thought of you, so good and true,
And Katie, now laid low,
And Pleasure's prime, in the golden time
Of twenty years ago.

Dear Katie's soul has found the goal
Where angels rest above;
Her voice is blent, in chorus lent
To songs of purest love;
She wears a crown, and yet looks down
To loved ones left below,
With smiling face and same sweet grace
Of twenty years ago.

God grant that we, left of the three,
May meet on earth again,
'Mid all the joy, without alloy,
That troops in Friendship's train;
Then we'll recall the pleasures all
That now through mem'ry flow,
And live them o'er and many more,
Like twenty years ago.



AWAKE THE HARP.

TO JOHN L. MURRAY, CHEYENNE.

AWAKE the harp of Ireland,
The symbol of her fall;
Upon her sod take noble stand,
And sound dear Freedom's call;
Brush off the dust that centuries
Upon its strings have flung,
And wake the proud old memories
Of which her bards have sung.
Now strain the chords to harmony,
And strike them bold and free,
For Erin and her liberty,
The gem beyond the sea.

Though faint the ray of hope now gleams,
From Erin's cloud-hid sky,
'Twill burst yet in effulgent streams
By grace from Him on high.
Once more her sons, brave, warlike, bold,
Will write a page of glory,
And wear again the collar of gold,
Renowned in olden story.

America, the freeman's land,
Looks with approving smile
Upon the gallant Fenian band
Who love the Emerald Isle;
And who with old Hibernia's power
Will dash the lion down,
And once again revive her hour
Of glory and renown.





TO HELEN BLYTHE.

THE gallant knight, in days of old,
Sang gaily flagon songs;
The monarch drained his cup of gold
And laughed his people's wrongs;
With goblets, flowing to the brim,
Bacchantes drink their wine,
But no alluring rosy rim
Brings song to harp of mine.

Yet notes of memory sweetly come
In songs I love to sing,
Of hearty, healthy bumpers, from
The gourd beside the spring.

The soldier loves his old canteen,
And sounds in song its praise;
The lover toasts his mistress queen
In wine-begotten lays;
The soul of poesy's outpoured
Alike to cup and king,
And all forget the brown old gourd
They drank from at the spring.

There's happiness in banquet halls,
Amid the bright and gay,
Where brilliant song the soul enthralls,
And wit and wine hold sway;
But all the joys in memory stored
No sweeter thought can bring
Than those of draughts from out the gourd,
With Nell, beside the spring.

PARADOX.

TO FRANK BOND.

I saw a poor old toper stand
At break of day, one chilly morn—
In this, our free, enlightened land,
An abject slave, distressed, forlorn—
Stand chilled, and aching to the core,
Before an open dogger door,
And while within he trembling gazed—
His nerves unstrung and reason dazed—
Upon the liquids at the bar,
He said, in voice of yearning raised,
“Thou art so near and yet so far.”

A little later on I saw
A poor and ragged, starving wretch,
Stand shivering in the air so raw,
Before the broad, inviting stretch
Of cafe window, richly filled
With meat and game, but freshly killed,
And quail and poultry, neatly dressed,

And trimmed and garnished, water-cressed,
A tempting menu for a czar—
The ragged man the sight addressed,
“Thou art so near and yet so far.”

I saw a bankrupt, standing where
His yearning eyes could plain behold
A mass of jewels, rich and rare,
And stacks of silver and of gold;
He thought of bright and happy days,
Of business brisk and prosperous ways,
And then of creditors and debt,
And duns, which now his path beset;
His paper, worse than under par;
And cried, in tones of deep regret,
“Thou art so near and yet so far.”

I heard a sighing lover plead
For pity from his favored fair,
He swore she was his faith and creed
And praised her eyes and auburn hair;
He knelt and prayed, and raved and tore,
And wept and shed his tears, galore.

She melted not to see him so,
But gave a strong, persistent "no."

Then, while he watched his fading star,
He groaned as he beheld her go,
"Thou art so near and yet so far."

I saw a soldier, old and lame,
Go begging for his daily bread;
I saw a poet strive for fame,
Who won it—after he was dead.

The world is full of gold and gear,
Of health, and gold, and goodly cheer,
Yet poverty and dire distress
Prevail among us none the less,
And hearts will sigh, that wear a scar,
And lips that Dead Sea apples press,
"Thou art so near and yet so far."

'Twas ever thus, that those who need
The most of pity and of aid—
And often those of greatest need—
Good Fortune doth the most evade.
The fickle dame will grind and rasp

The hand that seeks her toys to grasp;
'Tis he who delves the hardest way
Who wins a grudged and meager pay.
So here I loll, with my cigar,
While others whine their "lack-a-day,"
"Thou art so near and yet so far."

RECOMPENSE.

THE whistle gave its signal shriek;
The bell in warning measure rang;
The iron links complained, and eke
The heavy wheels their rail-beats sang.

The pond'rous train moved slowly on,
Till, reaching yon broad stretch of plain,
It flew toward the east, and gone,
My love left me, in tears again.

I cursed the train that bore away
The darling, all I love, from me—
But list! I bless the same to-day,
For that will take me, sweet, to thee.



TOT'S BIT.

To J. C. BAIRD, Esq.

'TIS seldom little Tot has coin—
He's only a poor man's son—
But Charity, with all her friends,
May count dear Tot as one.

Tot had a "bit" not long ago,
This winsome, weesome elf—
Perhaps some grown-up friend of his
Knows where he got the pelf.

The little toddler scrambled down
The steps that very day,
A candy shop full in his mind,
That stood just over the way.

He saw a man, outside the gate,
So ragged, pale and sad,
That Tot in sympathy stood still
And eyed the dime he had.

A selfish thought came rudely first,
But Charity was there.

"Here, tate the bit," he softly said,
"An' dit some tose to wear.

"An' buy some food an' tate it home,
An' feed yo' babies too."

• Poor little Tot had mighty thoughts
Of what a dime could do.

"'Twas only a little thing," you say? ,
 But Tot's a little boy,
 And that was like the widow's mite,
 And Tot's his father's joy.

LOVE'S AGONY.

Ich liebe dich, so musz Ich weinen bitterlich.—Gæthe.

I love you so it makes me cry;
 My heart is welling, and I sigh
 The whole day long.
 Sometimes I think that I must fly
 To where you are, or slowly die—
 And this is wrong—
 Will some sweet angel tell me why?

 Oh! why should I love her like this
 And be denied one little kiss,
 Or happy hope?
 What holds me back, that thus I miss
 The meed and measure of the bliss
 For which I cope,
 While flames of love around me hiss?

“Would wish that all whom I may meet
Would treat me with politeness.”

How strange, and yet how very true,
The sweetest and the fairest
Of earthly blessings—freest too—
We, blindly, make the rarest.

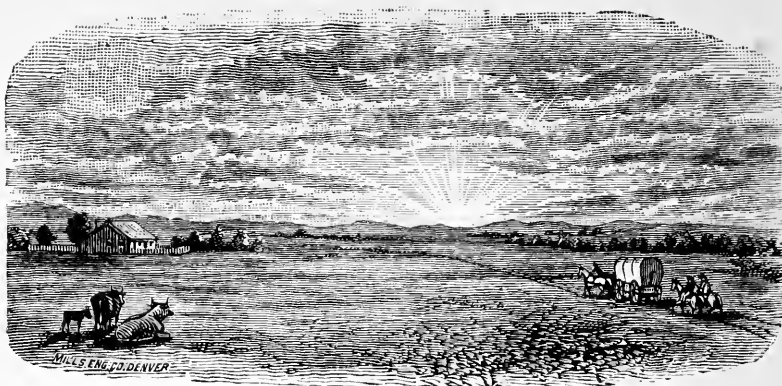
IMPROMPTU.

TO HUGO E. BUECHNER.

I N the still and the noon of the night
I hear the tick of the clock,
As I muse by the flickering light
And list to the time unlock.

In the buzz and the hum of the day,
The tick of the clock is unheard,
But, nevertheless, it sings away
Its changeless good-bye word,

To moments consigned to the past—
The moments of time, that unfold
The way to the open door at the last,
And the gate to the life untold.



THE SILVER GRAYS.

TO HON. HOMER MERRILL, OF RAWLINS, WYO.

THE sable curtain of the night
Is lifted in the glowing east,
And in the rosy morning light
A young man rises from a feast.

“Boyhood is gone,” said he to those
Who stood around him there,
“And inward come the tidal flows
Of Age and all its care.

“Youth’s bright illusions all are past.
And duty bids me go
And build a home to rest at last,
When life’s chill winds shall blow.”

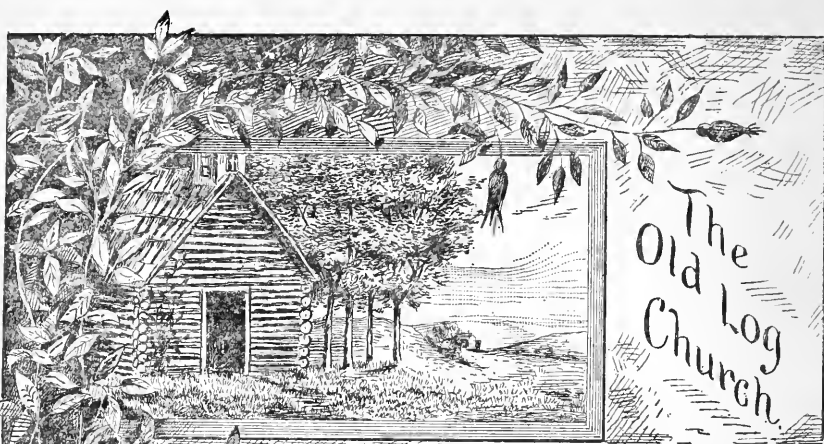
Beside him through the wilderness,
His dear and sweet young wife
Is ever there, with love's caress;
The solace of his life.

Among the dim old forest aisles,
Across the bloomless plain,
And 'mong the mountain's wild defiles,
Their weary way is lain.

Onward, toward the setting sun,
They work their toilsome way,
Which opening 'fore his axe and gun,
In shines the eastern day.

Now here to-day some old folks stand,
The brave, the strong, the true,
Who settled up this shining land,
And some are 'neath the yew.

May honors, peace and plenty dwell,
Through all their coming days,
With these good folks we love so well,
The dear old Silver Grays.



TO HON. F. E. WARREN, GOV. OF WYOMING.

ON olden walls, in memory's
halls,

With roses 'round it clinging,
A picture rare, of antique air,
The old log church is swinging.

Of timbers rough, and gnarled and tough,
It stands in rustic beauty,
A monument to good intent
And loyal, Christian duty.

The forest trees, kissed by the breeze
Of early autumn weather,
Stand grimly by, and seem to sigh
And bend their boughs together.

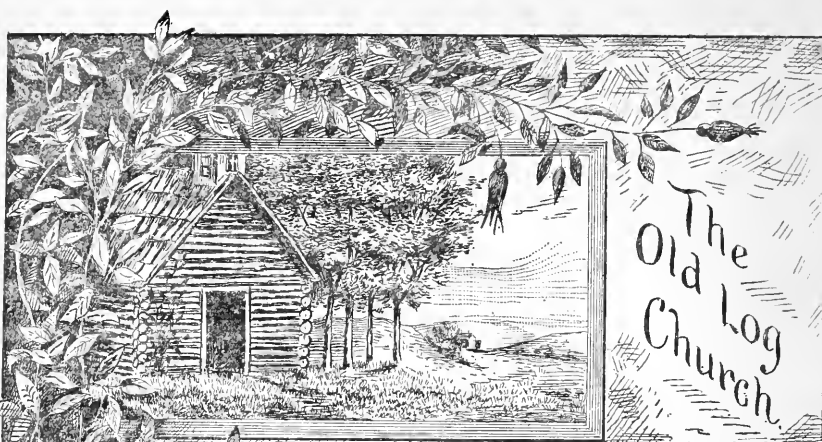
They seem to feel that woodman's steel
Will come to end their glory,
And whisper low, and soft and slow,
Among their leaves, the story.

Down by the mill, and up the hill,
And through the hazel thicket,
And o'er the mead, brown pathways lead
Up to the rustic wicket.

And by these ways, on holy days,
The village folk collected,
And humbly heard the Sacred Word,
And worshipped unaffected.

Sweet Fancy's art and poet's heart
Can see the old-time preacher
And village sage, now turn the page
As minister, or teacher.

For in the church, with dreaded birch,
On week-days he presided,
In awful mien, a tutor seen,
'Twixt lore and licks divided.



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'Twixt lore and licks divided.

But where it stood, in dappled wood,
A city sprang to life,
And jolly noise of barefoot boys
Is lost in business, rife.

With years now flown, the children, grown,
Are launched on life's mad billows;
The pretty maid is matron staid,
The master's neath the willows.

A MINER'S MEMORY.

BIG warning drops, like skirmishers,
Rattle amid the bowers;
The wind weeps through the pines and firs
In the stillicide of showers;
I sit in the hut and hearken
To the voices of the storm,
And I watch the mountain darken,
While I keep thy memory warm.
Delving day by day for treasure,
Locked within these vaults of stone,

While I hum a homely measure
That I've sung to you alone,
Day and night, and ever singing,
Comes a minstrel fay from thee,
And on memory's bells he's ringing
Songs of love you've sung to me.

TOT'S TELEGRAPH.

“COME, show me, dear Granny,
Which way she did go;
My sweet little cousin,
Who loved me so.
Ten hundred miles away?
Over the plains?
Across the high mountains?
Through snow and the rains?
Oh! it was long ago
She went away,
And every big hour
Seems just like a day.

“Let me go call again
My very best,
And maybe my cousin,
Way off in the west,
Where days go a-hiding,
Will hear me, and then
I know she’ll come, Granny,
Quick as she can.
She’d like to see Tottie,
I know, Granny dear,
So let me go tell her
We want her back here.”

Thus plead little Tottie,
A wee four-year-old,
Blue-eyed and handsome,
With curls of bright gold.
He has heard that his father
Can talk every day
To men across oceans,
Far, far away;
Then why shouldn’t he

Have a line of his own,
To send her a message—
His love who has flown.

KITTY COYLE.

NOW the woods are fresh and green,
Kitty Coyle,

Let us seek their verdant sheen,
Kitty Coyle,

And while an hour away
Of the beauteous summer day
'Mid the sweets that cannot stay,
Kitty Coyle,

For my muse you do invoke,
And my heart is almost broke
With the love you do provoke,
Kitty Coyle.

In the tresses of your hair,
Kitty Coyle,

My heart you did ensnare,
Kitty Coyle,

And in the charming light
Of your eyes so deep and bright
My heart is buried quite,

Kitty Coyle,

And I see within the hue
Of their heaven-tinted blue
To happiness a clue,

Kitty Coyle.

How bitter sweet is love,

Kitty Coyle,

That passion from above,

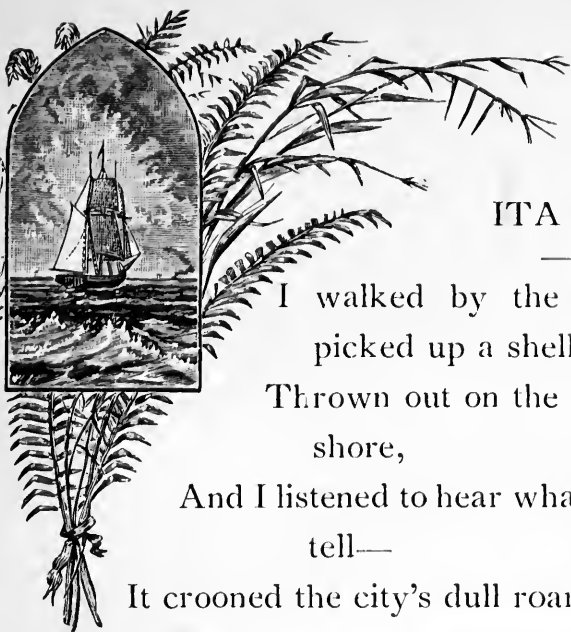
Kitty Coyle,

And this moment while I kneel,
What exquisite joy I feel
In my heart so warm and leal,

Kitty Coyle,

Oh! I'll suffer endless pain,
And I'll never smile again,
If my love you do disdain,

Kitty Coyle.



ITA EST.

I walked by the sea and
picked up a shell,
Thrown out on the scalloped
shore,
And I listened to hear what it could
tell—

It crooned the city's dull roar.
I threw it, far back, in the foaming sea;
Its song was a dreary drone;
A story of sorrow and pain, to me—
The memory of a moan.

Some flowers, that grew by the homeward way,
I plucked as I strolled along;
They drooped and died with the waning day,
And end of a vesper song.
'Tis easy to keep a glittering sin—
They last until cast aside;
But fair, sweet prizes, we glorify in,
We've gathered and they have died.



A FANTASY.

TO MY MOTHER.

OUR noble craft was gliding down
The river, dark and seething;
I paced the deck, and memories sweet
Came gently o'er me stealing.

The darksome clouds had cleared away,
The stars were brightly twinkling;
And in the distance sweetly chimed
The far-off herd-bell's tinkling.

And from me to the distant shore,
In radiant beauty beaming,
A path of light upon the tide
Was clearly, softly, streaming.

It was as if the waters dark
Had stolen all the gladness
That shines from Luna's kindly face,
And left it full of sadness.

As, fast or slow, the boat rode on,
Still in the waters glimmering,
From off the starboard guard, this light
Danced, clear and bright and shimmering.

While gazing on the weird-like scene,
A beauteous vision lightly
Stepped on the path, and toward me came—
An angel, fair and sightly.

Oh! what a moment to my soul
Was that when she was near me:
Before my raptured eyes there stood
My sister, loved so dearly.

I sought to hold her in my arms—
My mother's long-lost daughter—
But smiling with good-bye, she sank
Beneath the gurgling water.

L'AMOUR.

I love to love; 'tis youth itself—
The fount De Soto sought—
But with no kingly power or pelf
Is love's sweet solace bought.

Just yesterday I tottered 'long
A dreary, weary way,
Crooning a rickety, droning song,
Like some old harper's lay.

I, wondering, thought of growing old,
And why? with heart so strong?
But trudged along the cheerless wold
Humming the rickety song.

'Twas lack of love—the death of soul—
For Love is, true, a boy.
I met the boy and quaffed his bowl,
Found you and youth and joy.

BEN LELAND.

TO B. F. ZALLINGER, OF DENVER.

A minstrel old, but not like those
Who live in olden story,
Who touched the harp and sweetly sang
Of knightly deeds and glory;

A minstrel old, who sang the songs
Of Pompey and of Sambo,
And tuned his voice in concert with
The quaint old thrumming banjo;

A minstrel old, whose quips and quirks
And burlesque recitation,
Convulsed the gathered crowds that heard
Their humorsome relation;

Who, in his drifting, tossed about
And by misfortune bandied,
At last caught on a foreign shore,
All homeless, friendless, stranded—

His only help the old banjo—
 Eked out his sad existence.
Alone, sweet memory showed him home,
 And blotted out the distance.

In Britain's capital, one night,
 A minstrel band was singing,
And through the hall, in mellow notes,
 "Kentucky Home" was ringing.

And as the numbers died away
 The old man sat and listened,
While in his dim and failing eyes
 Fond memory's tear-drops glistened.

"Sing it once more," he trembling cried,
 And all the people started,
As if the strange old man had ris'n
 From 'mongst the long departed.

The minstrel band sang once again,
 And when the song was ended
The old man's song, with that refrain,
 In hope beyond had blended.



DAY DREAMS.

TO MY ANGEL SISTER.

THERE hangs within my
lonely room,
A picture, deftly shaded,
Of trees and flowers, all in bloom,
'Mid day that's scarcely faded.
The prospect toward the horizon
Is tinged with vapors golden,
Where day's last rays are thrown upon
A forest, wild and olden.

The picture hangs before the chair
Where sat I, lately, dreaming,
And in it, 'mid the foliage there
An angel's form, in seeming,
Arose upon sweet Fancy's wings
And gave me kindly greeting;
'Tis your dear face that vision brings—
I'm waiting its repeating.



WILL. M. GARRARD.

COME, DREAMS.

TO DR. W. M. GARRARD.

OH leagues! Oh leagues of mountain waste
That lie between my love and me!
Come, Sleep, with swift and blessed haste,
And span the rugged sea;
Come, Dreams! Oh Dreams! I long for thee
To bring my idol back to me.

'Tis true, my darling baby love—
My heart, my treasure and my soul—
The loving Father, up above,
In sleep doth lead us to the goal
Where, dreaming, I'm caressing thee,
And dreaming thou art kissing me.

Through all the dreary, weary day,
In all my waking hours,
I sigh along the heavy way
That lies between this love of ours;
But we can meet in dream-land bowers
And gather there love's sweetest flowers.

A DREAM.

TO HON. S. C. BASCOM, OF KENTUCKY.

ONCE on a balmy summer day
I bade my cumbering cares adieu,
And wandered from my darksome way
To scenes of fairer, brighter hue.

I rambled through a shady wood,
Where, oft in childhood I'd been told,
Lived elfin people, pure and good,
And where a mystic river rolled.

As darkness gathered o'er the earth,
And bright stars glittered in the sky,
When all the birds had ceased their mirth,
And nature hushed her lullaby,

I kneeled beside a gnarled old tree,
Upon a soft and mossy bank,
And soon, in happy reverie,
My troubled spirit sweetly sank.

Then, on the zephyrs borne along,
And echoing through the sylvan aisles,
I heard this sweet melodious song:
“Dame Fortune comes with sunny smiles.”

She came and brought a golden cup,
Filled from pellucid Lethe's stream,
And gave it me that I might sup
Till Fancy spread a cheerful dream.

I drank, and straightway rose a scene
Such as no mortal eye e'er scanned;
Sweet fairies danced upon a green,
To music from a daisy band.

Methought, that 'mid the fairy throng
I saw my loved one sporting there,
And heard her cheery, winsome song
Ring sweetly on the moonlit air.

And happiness without alloy
Beamed from her blue eye's soul-lit ray;
Her soul seemed flowing o'er with joy—
The bonnie, blithesome, blessed fay.



John Lincoln

Will Rogers

EDGAR WILLIS NYE.

I've watched thy conspicuity,
It's growth and continuity,
And wished thy contiguity,

Bill Nye.

I've enjoyed thy lucidity
And thine artless timidity,
Combined with intrepidity,

Like pie.

No other man's jocundity
Hath near so much profundity,
Nor yet the same rotundity,

Bill Nye.

And thou findest it lucriferos—
The same as, argentiferos—
While the cheering is vociferous,

Aye, aye.

But now, discarding levity,
Assuming proper brevity—
I wish to thee longevity,

Bill Nye.

And I'm praying rever-ent-ly
That the sweet subse-quent-ly
Will deal with thee most gently.

Bye, bye.

O'KEEFE OF PIKE'S PEAK.

THOU art gone from our gaze, O'Keefe,
And the order that took you's a thief.
Your lies will be missed,
And the man will be hissed
Who tries to come up to O'Keefe.

In pseudology you are the chief,
And also the blooming cap-sheaf.
We stand up in line
And shed tears of brine
Because you are going, O'Keefe.

There's nothing can measure this grief—
We are wrecked on Sorrow's cold reef—
As a magnificent liar,
None ever stood higher
Than you, the colossal O'Keefe.

NO! NO! NO!

BE your wife, my gallant beau?
I'd smile to murmur, no, no, no.
Do I love you? Yes indeed—
That's a main point in my creed.
But I'm too young to marry yet,
And much to utter fly, you bet.
My married sisters, Sue and Nell,
Were each a sweet and dashing belle;
Their husbands are the best of men—
Jolly Joe and royal Ben—
But Sue and Nell don't ride about,
And go to concert, ball and rout,
And harvest fun and see the plays
As in their blessed single days,

And as your humble servant does,
With beau and brother, friend and coz.
Somehow, a hubby thinks his wife
Should shed her shell and change her life,
And quite forego all maiden bliss
Because she's simply doffed the Miss.
I love you, Jim, my gallant beau,
But we'll not marry, no, no, no.

* * * * *

Just what I said! See there! See there!
Now listen to my Jimmie swear.
And now he stalks across the floor,
And rushes out and bangs the door.
My married sisters, Nell and Sue,
Say that's just like their hubbies do.
I much dislike to lose my beau,
But we'll not marry, no, no, no.



HANNAH McGLUE.

TO A. IDELMAN.

BY a little white cot, where prairie flowers
Grow nearly in at the door.

And fairies at night, in their tiny bowers,

Sing low to each elfin wooer;

Where under the stars, like diamonds glisten

As bright as the stars, the dew,

When all the birds to the whippoorwill listen:

'Twas there I met Hanner McGlue.

Her hair is as black as the night raven's pinion;

Her voice is the lark's sweet song.

My heart is her slave, her dutiful minion,

In fetters of love bound strong.

Her eyes are bright and wondrously witchin',

Of Heaven's deep beauteous blue;

And her love, dear love, I am ever so rich in.

My darling sweet Hanner McGlue.

One night when the bright crescent moon was
shining

So softly in at the door,

And vines 'round the trellis were tenderly
twining,

I told her my love o'er and o'er.

She promised me then she'd be mine forever—

My own, sweet, loving and true—

I'll never be sad again, never, no never,*

I've won my dear Hanner McGlue.

*That is, h——y e——r.

A SKIMMER.

TO HARRY DEUEL, OF OMAHA.

AS you journey through life,
With its joy and its strife,
Its sorrows, and blessings, and pain,
The lights of the day,
Or the shades on the way,
Its earnings, or losses or gain;
You'll find ere you've ran
The short little span

That leads to where Zion's lights glimmer,
There's nothing so true
As what I tell you—
“There's a great many holes in a skimmer.”

The young and the old
This truth may unfold,
That things cannot always go right.
Sometimes you'll be sure
That your friend is as pure
As streaks of the sun's brightest light.
But as clouds may arise
To darken the skies,
And the bright light of noon may grow dimmer,
In the first flush of youth
You may learn this sad truth:
“There's a great many holes in a skimmer.”

But brace up yourself
And gather your pelf,
The best friend's a dollar or two;
'Twill prove you indeed
A true friend in need,

As fervent as Heaven's deep blue;
 Then as you go 'long
 Remember this song—
 Just make it your text-book and primer;
 You'll never regret,
 If you never forget—
 "There's a great many holes in a skimmer."

OUT WEST.

TO ALFRED JACKSON, Esq.

IT makes no odds from whence you came,
 Nor what your family rates;
 In fact we care not what your name
 Formerly was in "the States."
 Just settle down and do the square,
 And try your level best
 To be an honest man, and fair,
 If you want to grow up in the West.
 It is not name, or style, or state,
 That pulls men through out here;

None of these things will make you great
In many a lingering year;
But walk a chalk, and bear a hand
To help a needy guest;
Pay up your debts and show your sand,
If you want to grow up with the West.

On mountains, plains, and rugged brooks
Here's room for all the world—
Except the dudes and cranks and crooks—
And "Welcome's" flag's unfurled.
A man who keeps the "Silver Rule"
Will always stand the test;
A chap from any meaner school
Is apt to "go up" in the West.

MY GIRL.

TO FRANK H. CLARK.

NO, she's not an angel—not a bit,
And, truly I don't care—not a whit;
'Pon honor I am glad,
But I fear 'twould make her sad
That I said it—if not mad—saucy kit.

Now, wouldn't I look sweet, mister man,
 With an angel on my arm?—'twouldn't pan,

A-going to a ball,

Or perhaps nowhere at all—

Now wouldn't that be gall—Kiser Khan?

An angel with red hair—think of that—

And candy-striped hose—rather fat—

Clean gone upon a team—

Rather spoony on ice-cream,

And a daisy—I should scream—at the bat.

And if she were an angel—don't you know?

She'd shake me mighty sudden—aint it so?

Then I would be bereft—

Most beautifully left—

With my gizzard shocking cleft—not for Joe!

WELL, RATHER.

TO GEO. L. TAYLOR.

I'D rather picnic on the porch,

And croquet in the yard,

With Susie Ann or Liza Jane

To be my playing pard,

Than go to any fishing place
On Independence Day,
And fight big flies and nasty gnats,
And swear my soul away.

I'd rather kill my gnawing greed
Before a home-spread feast,
Than take a chance of broken bones
Behind a livery beast;
To ride ten miles through heat and dust,
And very nearly die,
Just for the sticky privilege
Of sitting in a pie.

I'd rather spend the day at home
With little ones and wife,
And take a modicum of rest,
And lead a decent life,
Than go a-camping anywhere,
And soak myself in rain,
And limp to town that blasted night,
Racked with rheumatic pain.

EPIGRAMS.

“**A** straw will show,” said Lida Jane,
“Which way the zephyr blows.”
“Also,” said Tim O’Featherlane,
“Which way the julep goes.”

“What is a sigh?” she softly sang,
In poet’s frenzied rot.
“Ace high,” when nary pair is out,
Will simply scoop the pot.

They were sitting on the window-sill;
The night was balmy, clear and still,
When something I don’t know about
Occurred, alas, and they fell out.

Ah! she was angry too, I wot,
For ’twas a savage bump she got,
And as she fell, her golden hair
Caught in a tree and dangled there.

He saved the locks, but mild surprise
With sadness mingled in his eyes,
And she has lost her warm adorer,
Since now he's but her hair restorer.

With a beard like Rip Van Winkle,
And a pair of eyes that twinkle
If you drop but a nickel in his palm;
And he thanks you most sincerely,
And overwhelms you, nearly,
With his blessings and his rich, blarney balm.

He says he fought with Kearney,
And is on his homeward journey
From the bloody fields of war and the camp.
He has told his little story
Till his head and yarn are hoary,
And now he thinks it true, the aged tramp.

,It was a most unvarying rule,
That all the boys in our school
Who came from blooded stock,

Were ever dull," quoth Parvenu.

"Then one would guess," said Grin, "that you
Were never on the dunce's block."

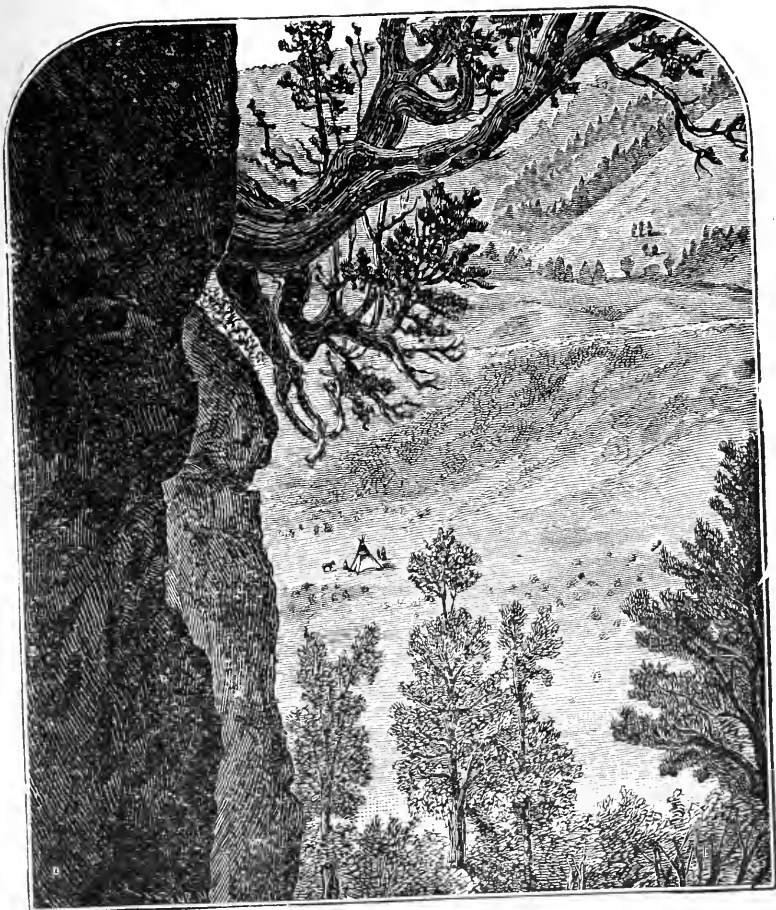
"I have some tenderlines," he said,

"Inscribed to my latest mash."

The night fiend read the stunning head,

And vowed that they were "hash."





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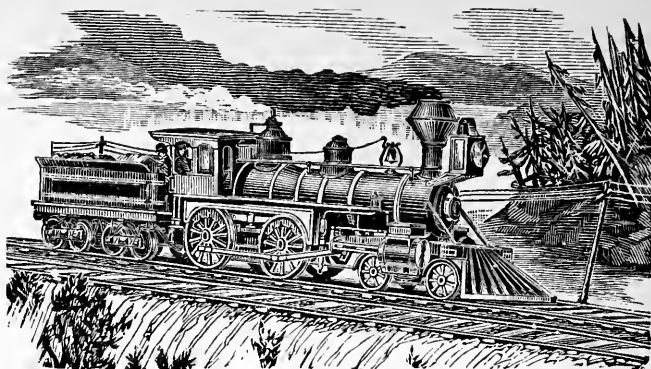
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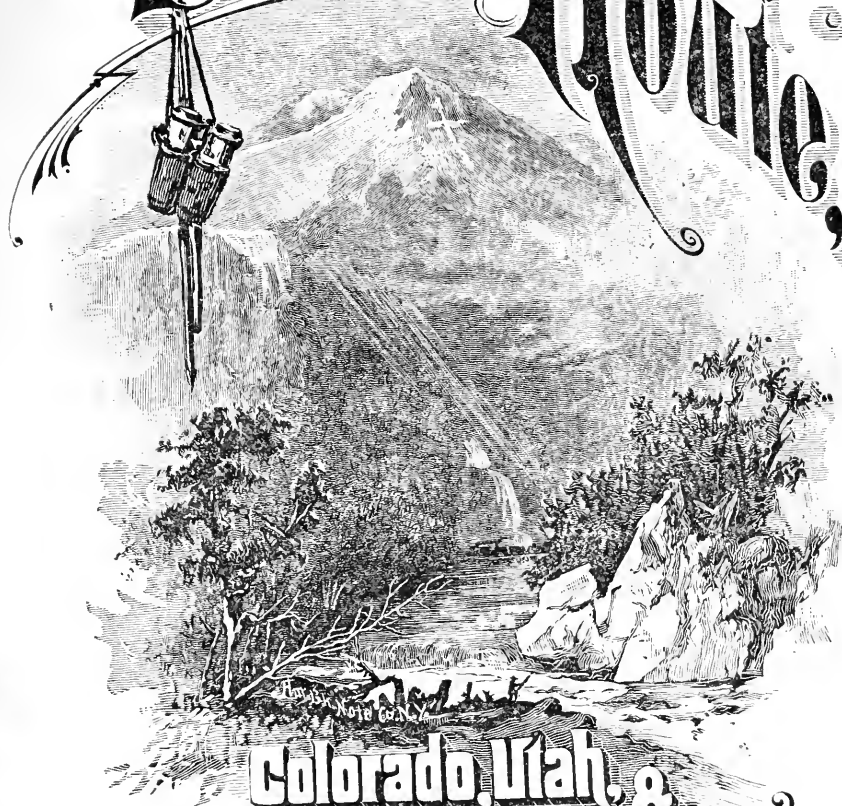
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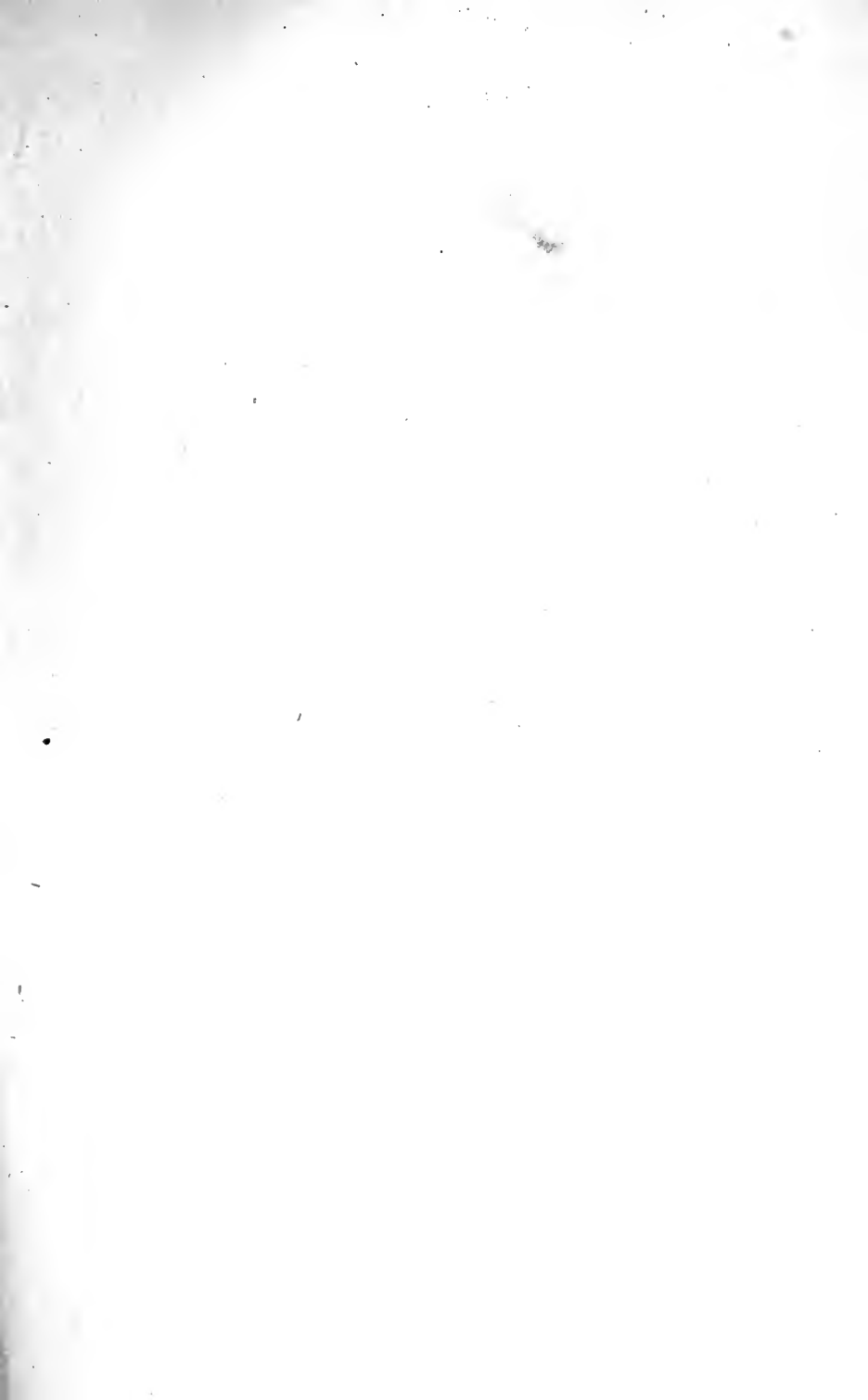
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